Nations, like individuals, must have the courage to face facts about themselves, the kind of courage which is prepared to say that the fault is *not in our stars*, but in ourselves. It is this same courage of introspection together with a wide knowledge of men and affairs, that finds clear expression in the following collection of essays by a distinguished Indian publicist. The book is divided into thirteen parts and the subjects dealt with vary from Congress Funds to a dialogue between Kautilya and Todarmal, from Communist Strategy to the Menace of Plutocracy, from the Indian Temperament to Population Control and from Preventive Detention to Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai?

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The *fault*, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

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NOT IN OUR STARS

By

A. D. GORWALA

THROUGH THE EYES OF AN INDIAN CRITIC

Bombay.

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INTRODUCTION

The Lord Buddha, whose birth in this country 2,500 years ago was celebrated with such enthusiasm last year, gives as the fourth step on the Eightfold Path that leads to the destruction of the selfish craving which is the root cause of the unhappiness of man, Right Vocation. By this he means not only that the vocation should be right for the individual but that the individual should carry it out rightly, should recognise its nature and its duties, act in accordance with the nature and fulfil the duties. The commentator, harried not a little by continuous and critical questioning from many quarters about the why and wherefore of his writings, may find it useful to consider the problem of right vocation in relation to himself. What is the nature of the task he has undertaken and what are its duties? The essence of both is summed up best perhaps in Milton's famous sentiment, "Give me the liberty to know, to utter and to argue, freely according to conscience, above all liberties." Freedom to know, to speak, to criticise, stands at the head of all freedoms. Tyrants, dictators, totalitarians fear it and try their best to destroy it. Free men and true democrats cherish and encourage it. The commentator has to be dedicated to it. If he is to do his duty, no other consideration can he allow to get in the way of his observance of it.

Obviously, then, he must be independent both in the way of his life and of his thought. The intelligent journalists employed by newspapers, who in addition to their other work on the papers, turn out a column of comment from time to time, are often so handicapped by the need to keep in line with the policies of their papers that they cease to be true commentators. They have occasionally, if not continuously, to be looking over their shoulders as they write. The commentator again, while experienced and well informed, has to be detached from politics. He must understand the game in order to explain it and give his opinion about it. But he must not let his judgment be disturbed by an undue interest in it. He must look at it not from the point of view of any individual or class good or welfare, but only from that of the interest of the general public. Having made up his mind, he must write plainly. Since it is his wish to be understood exactly, he must express himself clearly. For him, there can be no equivocation. He must also write fearlessly. Power must not frighten him nor prestige overawe him. The pressure of influence he must disregard, even though it may move to silence him through those who own or are in charge of the vehicles that give room to his thought.

The commentator's aim is the public good. He sees that its attainment or maintenance is impossible without an informed public opinion. He sees also that such an opinion can only come if knowledge of what bears upon the public weal is made available. So week after week, he takes up matters of interest to the public, the policies and actions of his own and other governments, significant happenings—international and national—examines them without malice or evil intent in the light of his knowledge, study and experience, and discusses them, in Milton's words, "freely according to conscience." With his conclusions and his views, some may disagree. On occasion, they may be widely disliked. Yet, thought is stimulated, the mind set to work, a point of view that arouses discussion brought to public notice. And there is ample opportunity for those who think otherwise to put other views and reasons before the public. The commentator writes perhaps once a week. The paper in which he writes has most probably correspondence and other columns, open for the other six days in the week to carry relevant and interesting replies to him, and attacks upon his opinions and arguments. Nay, even on the same day, side by side with his article, the editorial columns can point out the errors in his reasoning as they see them.

Democratic government has been with us only a short while in this country. Democratic tradition remains yet to be firmly established. In addition, the ruling party has, both at the centre and in the states, an overwhelming majority in the legislatures. The strength of votes that would make a reasonably strong opposition of like minds is almost everywhere lacking. Consequently, the check on Government that a strong, vigilant Opposition furnishes, the close examination of its policies and measures that would be the principal task of such an Opposition, are not to be found. Our newspapers as a whole have displayed creditable zeal in regard to one matter recently, the Government's policy about Hungary, but by and large, always allowing for honourable exceptions in special cases, the Press does not in any way take over the task of the Opposition. All the greater then the need for the commentator. Disinterested and free, he can at least say what he thinks about some of the policies and actions of Government, make suggestions, give advice, urge warning, point out wrongs, call for redress, help, in a sense, though by no means fully or effectively, to perform a few of the functions of the Indian Republic's loyal Opposition.

Those in authority and their supporters have no cause for anger or sorrow if he does this. On the contrary, they might consider that the best friend of any government is he who points out its faults so that they can be repaired. *He thus strengthens it. It is easy to say what Ministers* and Governments want or would like publicists to say. The duty of the commentator is, however, "to present to his readers not such things as statecraft would wish *them to know, but the truth as near as he can attain it.*"

29-11-1956

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INTERNAL PROBLEMS

1

GOVERNMENT AND DEMOCRACY

Congress Funds—Simple Living—An Imaginary Cabinet Meeting—Failure of Introspection—Errors and Remedies—Threatening to Resign—Preventive Detention—The New Finance Minister—The Bombay State Problem

2

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Study of Calcutta—The Party's Strategy—Increase of Influence—On the Small Hook—The Challenge of Civil War

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Anti-English—Regional Languages and Hindi—Slow But Sure

7

SOCIAL AND GENERAL

Caste Complexes—Dr. Ambedkar and Buddhism—The Failure of Prohibition—The Burden of the Past—The Indian Temperament—Praise by Foreigners—Lessons from Buddha

1

CONGRESS FUNDS

Is a socialistic pattern of society, defined by high Congress authority as a society based upon the Directive Principles of the Constitution that embody the essence of the concepts man has succeeded in discovering in the pursuit of social justice, likely to be brought about by a political party that relies for finance almost entirely on the economically powerful in business and industry, for whose accumulative and acquisitive instincts, incidentally, there would be little scope in the socialistic pattern?

That in a democracy no political party can function without funds, no election be fought without money, is common knowledge, though political organizers are as a rule very loath to raise the curtain concealing the methods and successes or failures of fund-raising. During the last elections some light was shed on Congress party chest replenishment by the controversy that broke out between the Congress Treasurer, Mr. Morarji Desai, Chief Minister of Bombay, and a prominent Socialist leader, Mr. Asoka Mehta, over the latter's accusation that the former was bringing pressure to bear on some industrialists to subscribe to the Congress cause. As often in political controversies, the rights and wrongs of the allegation about pressure were not thrashed out. It was apparent however, that the Congress Treasurer had sought support from rich financiers and manufacturers.

It being clear who pays the piper, the only remaining question is who calls the tune, the piper or the payer. On many points, of course, there is no conflict between the two. Sometimes, however, the piper, impelled by regard for the opinion of the many auditors whom he has to endeavour to please even though he does not look to them for finance, plays a tune not only not approved by, but extremely discordant to the ears of, the payer. Then a quiet, discreet, struggle of wills may well ensue behind the scenes, the result being not complete victory for either side perhaps, but a neat compromise from which the payer can draw not a little comfort. A recent example is said to be furnished by the revised budget proposals, raising the estimated revenue deficit by Rs. 10 crores.

In any case, it would seem to be fairly clear that so long as Congress funds continue to be obtained, by and large, from their present sources, there is no great likelihood of the party being able to move forward at an appreciable pace to the goals it officially proclaims. If it is sincere about carrying out its professions, it must change its patrons. The lakhs and thousands from the coffers of the select few must give place to the fives and tens from the pockets of the multitude. The Congress, with its enormous historical prestige and present popular leadership, ought not to have too great difficulty, if properly organized, in enrolling from all over the country, say, 20 lakh members, each of whom would contribute eight annas a month or six rupees a year. Thus the party would collect in a year Rs. 1.2 crores. Setting aside Rs. 20 lakhs for expenditure, a party chest of about Rs. 5 crores could be built up in five years, enabling elections to be fought without obligation to anyone except genuine party members, each giving his little to help forward what he considers the public good. Thus might special interests become insignificant and only the general interest prevail.

Again, is a socialistic pattern of society with its emphasis on egalitarianism, which in the context of this country must necessarily mean simple living, likely to be brought about by a political party the leaders of which, while paying lip-homage to austerity, show by their behaviour, as soon as they attain positions of power, an inclination towards inequality and luxury? Not for them the example of the Swiss President who, remaining in the modest suburban house he occupied before election, came in every morning to his office by bicycle or bus. Not content with being the lower middle-class men most of them are, they move up almost immediately into the upper class, altering their friends even to suit, as they think, their new positions. In the result, they get further and further away from the common man, however much they pride themselves on their knowledge of him, attained quite often through what they call contact at mass public meetings.

Conspicuous consumption is, on the whole, pleasing to them. They encourage by their presence gatherings at which a thousand or more people, who could easily afford to feed themselves, are feasted at the expense of one or other subscriber to their party funds. They revoked the very salutary rule limiting the number of those attending feasts to 50, and in some States, to 25. This restriction had made it possible for many sensible people of moderate means to avoid, without incurring odium, the unnecessary expenditure on weddings and other ceremonial occasions that custom decreed. In the state maintained through armed guards at the gates of Ministerial residences, the psychological vestiges of feudalism seem ever present.

That when this state of mind predominates, the chances of the flourishing of a real egalitarian society are very little, however great the emphasis in speech and writing on socialism, is clear from the Soviet example. With equality and fraternity as declared goals, with the total abolition, because of the revolution, of class distinctions, the feeling of superiority in the mind of the rulers has brought about a condition in which there is no egalitarianism.

If the Congress wishes the people to believe in the sincerity of its desire to attain the objective of the socialistic pattern of society, its leaders, more especially those in government, *must demonstrate that sincerity* in the normal pattern of their lives. The wearing of a white uniform and the eloquent preaching of far-away goals can prove little.

10-5-1955

SIMPLE LIVING

For maintaining health in Indian conditions the diet of a vegetarian should contain 14 ounces of cereals, 3 of pulses, 4 of leafy vegetables, 6 of other vegetables, *2 of ghee and oil, 10 of milk and milk products, 3 of* fruits and nuts and 2 of sugar or jaggery. Clearly when the diet of a person consists only of the cereals and pulses, his health must be affected very detrimentally. How much more so must it not be, when he cannot afford to buy even the necessary quantities of cereals and pulses, and has perforce to make do with less! Then he can only be described as semi-starved. Between 1/5th and 1/4th of our population is in this condition, about seven to nine crores of people unable, because of lack of resources, even to obtain 14 ounces of cereals and 3 of pulses. Quite a *number too are very probably just at* or slightly above this bare minimum level.

Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab has just left his post of

Governor of Bombay to become the head of the Congress Party in Orissa, and its Chief Minister. For at least the last two weeks, the newspapers have been full of descriptions of banquets and feasts given in his honour.

The Chief Minister Mr. Morarji Desai entertained him last Saturday. The details are reported thus: "Covers were laid for over 500 guests. . . . The banquet was held on the lawns of Council Hall which were tastefully decorated and the illuminated dome of the Prince of Wales Museum in the background provided a fairyland setting." Nor is this anything new. The departure of Dr. Mahtab merely presents an occasion. Banquets, feasts, decorations, illuminations, these are always with us.

The Prime Minister of India lives in a palace. His cabinet colleagues live in luxurious bungalows. Each has an armed police or military guard at his gate, one or more cars in his garage. The Chief Ministers of States and their colleagues are similarly accommodated, guarded and vehicled. Generally the houses are furnished at State expense. Lavish official and non-official entertainments are the rule, both in Delhi and at State capitals.

Is there not something extremely incongruous between these two pictures and the first? There might not be, of course, in certain circumstances. Supposing the men in power were there by right of conquest, the chiefs of an army that had destroyed the national forces, they might well regard themselves as entitled to these fruits of victory. Supposing they were there by right of inheritance, autocratic Amuraths following upon autocratic Amuraths, again there might appear no incongruity. Supposing they were the Polit Bureau of a Communist party that had seized power and was ruthlessly enforcing its will upon the people through the State apparatus, this behaviour would seem entirely in accord with the situation.

But these men are not conquering chiefs, hereditary despotic monarchs or a Communist oligarchy. They are the duly elected representatives of a free democracy, chosen by their colleagues for positions of pre-eminence because they consider them to have political acumen and wisdom. Many of them are worthy individuals, esteemable in their own right. What causes such men to act thus, to be blind to the incongruity of their behaviour? Perhaps it is belief in the ancient saying that power means grandeur. There may be the apprehension that if they do not live grandly, they may fail to impress the people with the reality of their power. Perhaps it is the tendency to conspicuous consumption and display inherent in so many of us, to which they are able to give full vent in their exalted positions. Perhaps it is merely conformity with usage, the unwillingness to break away from a pattern of behaviour sacrosanct to authority in the past. Perhaps in addition there is an element of competition, a desire to impress foreigners, to show themselves to be even greater than their predecessors in a previous regime.

Though of course the myth of a revolution prevails and it is common to find political orators referring to the revolution that was made, the mental make-up of those in authority has very little inclination towards fundamental change. Basically it is bourgeois, that of the lower middle class interspersed occasionally with the higher middle class, the sections to which, indeed, belonged the forbears of most of those wielding power. For minds of this kind it is very difficult to depart from the norm of the accepted behaviour of their classes. Yet, in present circumstances, it is essential that they do. Only by their sincerely complying in detail with the ideal of Austere Simplicity—and this does not mean just wearing khadi or other hand-woven cloth that costs twice as much and lasts half as long as mill-cloth—can they influence the classes to accept willingly the sacrifices which must inevitably be their lot, if the aims of the Constitution are to be achieved, the savings for the Plan increased, or the expectations of rising tax-yields fulfilled.

Let the Ministers be content with simple two or three bedroom flats not far from their place of work, let them walk or ride on bicycles from their homes to it, dispensing with separate cars and keeping only two or three as a pool for visits to distant sites, let them set their faces severely against large parties and lavish entertainment, and a new spirit will soon become apparent throughout the land. No longer will the emphasis be all the time on reward. Men will be willing to consider responsibility sufficient reward, as indeed do some even now. Suggestions now taken seriously, such as that of the Government of India's favourite American expert that Rs. 4,000 a month is not high enough salary, will then receive only the contempt they merit. Amongst the common people, the semi-starved and those just above them, will begin to emerge an appreciation of government and an understanding of its sincerity that will greatly facilitate its tasks and cause even those that have almost nothing to make some contribution.

When the chief men in a government or party merely preach, the reply is generally a shrugging of shoulders. Only when they preach according to their practice, when their own bona fides are established by clear conduct, can they hope that their preaching will produce the desired results.

18-10-1956

AN IMAGINARY CABINET MEETING

Were our Ministers contrite of heart and humble of mind, the last Cabinet meeting before Republic Day might begin somewhat like this.

The Prime Minister addressing his colleagues: "At the end of the year, the ancients wisely required men to recollect their errors and sins during the preceding twelve months, to reflect upon them and to repent of them. That is not included in our agenda today, but let us take it up as the first item, even though it may consume a good deal of time. Well, what do you say?"

An approving murmur having arisen from all round the table, despite the amazed look on the faces of several *Ministers, the Prime Minister leant back in his chair and* gazing meditatively at the ceiling, said: "How prone we are to err, and with the best of intentions, too! That States Reorganisation muddle! If someone had told me, Pantji and Maulana Saheb, that you and I, with the assistance of Morarji here, could have made such a mess, I would never have believed it. I see it all now, of course. If we didn't want Bombay to go to Maharashtra—and really even now I am not quite sure why we didn't—the obvious thing was to join Vidarbha to the composite Bombay province. But we never concentrated on the problem sufficiently. Listening to too many people and thinking too little of consequences, immediate and future—that was our trouble. And, of course, that man Panniker, with his plausible arguments and impressive ways. (I have made him Ambassador again, too. In Paris, of all places! I do hope it will turn out alright *and I won't have to be sorry.) When I think of all that* happened, the many riots and police firings, the bitterness of heart and frustration of spirit, I do feel we sinned. Mea Culpa! May we be forgiven."

Pant : "It was an error, a grievous error. But I would say, don't forget how others misled us. Those Congress Maharashtrians with their Bombay Minister-leaders, nay, even good Morarji here, their appreciations were always so far away from what actually happened. Sorry as I am about it all, perhaps I am even more sorry about the later Ahmedabad incidents. How easily those could have been averted if we had only used a little imagination. Alas, our thought-ways seem to have become even more wooden than those of the wooden bureaucracy we so often decried. And the whole avoidable, so easily avoidable. That is the real tragedy."

Azad : "A bad business, certainly, and I would not play down our responsibility. One very sad feature, of course, was that because of it, we lost Deshmukh. I know some of you thought him difficult. Yet how we miss his stability and dignity. There was an internal integrity about that man I liked immensely."

Morarji : "Personally, I am not too enthusiastic about him. On this unusual occasion though, I feel I must join you in admitting that we made very bad mistakes. Ordinarily, of course, I am unaccustomed to concede that I can be wrong. Should we not at least have accepted the very reasonable requests for judicial enquiry into the various firings? I set my face against them, but I am not sure now, not at all sure I was right."

The Prime Minister : "How much truth is there, do you think, in the feeling people have that power has corrupted us? A great deal probably. I know I do many things now that would have seemed dreadful to me before. Take this Preventive Detention Act we insist on maintaining. Why, even that diehard Churchill would be shocked by it. I remember how in the middle of the war, when Morrison wanted to release Mosely, the leader of the Fascists, from detention under some section of the Defence of Realm Act they had, Churchill supported him strongly. I had the passage copied out the other day. This is what he said:

'The power of the Executive to cast a man into prison without formulating any charge known to the law and particularly to deny him judgment by his peers for an indefinite period, is in the highest degree odious, and is the foundation of all totalitarian governments whether Nazi or Communist. *It is only when extreme danger to the State can be pleaded*, that this power may be temporarily assumed by the Executive. And even so, its working must be interpreted with the utmost vigilance by a free Parliament. Extraordinary powers assumed by the Executive with the consent of Parliament in emergency should be yielded up when and as the emergency declines. Nothing can be more abhorrent to democracy than to imprison a person or keep him in prison because he is unpopular. This is really the test of civilisation.'

Can we say there is an emergency now? Do we not perhaps in any case interpret emergency too liberally? And how many people do we hold in jail without trial? A few thousand at least? There is also always Abdulla, poor fellow."

Krishnamachari : "Power has of course made us different. It is natural. We look at things from on high now. I always had a bitter tongue and hardly ever minded hurting peoples' feelings, but now I positively delight in being severe and saying cutting things. Still this detention is undoubtedly very wrong. Why can't we do away with it?"

Jagjivan Ram : "There are always so many objections from colleagues. Public peace, law and order, tranquillity, interference in elections, what can one do? How simple the locking up solution! But this isn't the only corruption. Think of all the money we spend on shows, feasts, parties, illumination, entertainments. And all for what? Our greater glory. No permanent advantage to the people."

Katju: "Perfectly true. Apart from anything else, it offends my lawyer's sense of logic. Here we go on passing resolutions urging upon the people austerity and saving, and at the same time waste ourselves, and make other people waste, any amount of money. Take Republic Day. I hear institutions and individuals are being actually asked by Governments to have fine displays of illumination. How many crores will go down the drain throughout the country? Have we no better use for money? If all that is needed are shows, the Defence Forces have plenty of bands and we could march troops picturesquely up and down to music in all the big centres. That would not cost anything, or very little in any case. But we must be ostentatious. Why do we do it? Why?"

Prime Minister: "Yes, I know. It is all quite wrong. Some old Gandhians whom I respect have talked to me more than once about the need for simple living in high places if our appeals and plans are to be effective. And when they do, I quite agree. But somehow things just go on as before. We have none of us the heart to face up to inconveniences probably."

Nanda: "It isn't only inconveniences, Sir, it is a real liking for luxury that we've fallen prey to. Think of the Congress at Indore. The lordly mansions we were put up in, and all the tremendous tamasha. What expenditure! By whom! And for what! These shows don't even attract popular sympathy anymore. We've fallen into bad ways, and it is difficult to give them up."

Khandubhai: "Injustice and oppression don't seem to mean the same thing to us that they did. Take this suffering in Hungary. How wrong we were not to oppose it whole-heartedly from the beginning! And we don't seem to have learnt our lesson yet. Even on the last U.N. vote to appoint a committee to obtain information from refugees since it is certain that the Soviet-sponsored Hungarian Government won't let in Hammarskjoeld or his men, our Krishna Menon abstained, though Burma and Ceylon voted for, and Ceylon is actually serving on the Committee. Why do we behave in this way? We are just aligning ourselves with the oppressive Soviet Communists."

Prime Minister : "Yes, I am afraid it does look rather like that. There is far too much Communist coming and going too, nowadays. Here's Chou enlai, coming for the fourth time, and Zhukov. Heaven knows how many others are just queueing up to unload themselves on us. I am really beginning to feel quite uneasy. But somehow one doesn't like to be definite. Oh, well, we have talked for quite a time now and we have certainly recollected some of our errors and reflected on them. Perhaps we have even repented. But real repentance means action. We must see that it comes. Will it, though, will it?"

24-1-1957

FAILURE OF INTROSPECTION

The post-election period has seen Mr. Nehru deeply engaged in introspection and party examination. While the statements that have resulted from these processes are well-intentioned, they are not distinguished by grasp of the essential.

The picture they give is of a basically decent individual, groping around in the dark, falling down steps and alleyways, picking himself up again, hoping somehow or other to get through. Now were Mr. Nehru merely a self-seeking politician or party boss, a Shukla or Suhrawardy, it would not be worthwhile troubling about his thought-processes or attempting, so far as lay in one's power, to prevent his good intentions becoming merely the paving-stones of the downward path that leads to perdition. But a basically decent person always merits sympathy and assistance. His pride may care nothing for the former and his consciousness of power may throw aside the latter. Yet both must, in the nature of things, go out to him.

In his search for the right answers to the many difficult matters with which he is beset, Mr. Nehru would do well to remember the core of the tradition of the Hindu political theorists, namely, that the problem of government is the ethical problem of the individual projected on the field of the state and that its solution lies in right doing; that consequently, the keys to sound government and prosperous society are the personal integrity of the ruler and the moral sense of the citizenry, and further, that no trick of administrative technique or organisation, no constitutional devices or amendments can save a government, state or political party lacking these essentials.

Always remembering this and looking at the Indian scene in the light this throws upon it, Mr. Nehru may proceed to put to himself some questions. Since the overall ethical problem begins at least with that of the individual, the first few might well concern himself.

Getting right answers to these would also be helpful in dealing with the others, since, in the words of Confucius, the gentleman preaches according to his practice. Mr. Nehru might begin by asking himself:

(1) Why do I live in a palace? Is it not more fitting that the Prime Minister of India, an exceedingly poor country, should live as simply as possible? Would it not be desirable to change over to a small bungalow?

(2) Why do I accept presents? Pictures of me are shown in several of the papers riding a horse presented to me by a private individual. Presents of all kinds come to me, small and large. They may be as insignificant as mango baskets, but why do I have to accept them? Does it set a good example?

(3) Why do I let flattery affect me? Surely I have *no need to hear praise of myself. Is it true that many* people can get me to serve their ends by flattery? Is it also true that I am inclined to take a very poor view of those who are not openly appreciative?

(4) Am I responsible for the creation of the atmosphere of darbari that is said to surround me now? Is it true that my personal private secretary has acquired such great influence because of this, that many Ministers, to say nothing of Secretaries, pay him court and ask for his help?

(5) Do I hate to hear the unpleasant truth so much that most people will not tell it to me, and even the frankest hesitate? Is my approach such that I make it clear that all I want is agreement with my views?

(6) Do I bear, sub-consciously perhaps, a grudge against those who hold on to contrary opinions? Does my countenance become completely stony when anything I do not like to hear is told to me, especially about somebody of whom I am fond? Do I entirely reject from consideration any such statement, even when wholly *bona fide*?

Passing on to the party sphere Mr. Nehru might ask himself: Where does the money to keep this party going come from? How much was spent on the last elections? Are there any overall accounts available? Are they properly kept? How many people gave over a thousand rupees? Do large speculators and businessmen supply the bulk of the funds in lump sum contributions? Is payment also made in cash so that hidden black market money gets passed on? Why do such rich men make these large contributions? Is it because of their love for the Congress socialist ideal? Do they get any promises in return? Were they or some of them in fact favoured during the last five years?

Is not the result of this method of fortifying the party chest, the selection of candidates who will be amenable to the pressures brought to bear upon them? Does it not seriously discourage straightforward, public-spirited people from entering the political arena on the Congress side? Does it not lead to lack of contact between the Congress legislator and the mass of his constituents? Does it not make the legislator feel totally independent of them? Is this not a system that is liable to any amount of corruption since even in collection and expenditure there is considerable scope for leakage? Ought not the first endeavour of anyone seeking to establish healthy political life to be obtaining funds for the party from a large number of regular small subscribers, spread all over the country, subscribing because of their liking for the cause and their faith in it, the money collected being subject to proper control and audit so as to leave no room for any suspicion of misuse? In the absence of some such scheme, with Congress political life corrupt at the very root, can there be much hope of purity at the later stages?

Mr. Nehru states: "The public has lost by and large its respect for the integrity of the average Congressman." He also realises that what the government does is very important for the Congress organisation, the administration being "if you like, the executive branch of the Congress." Surely then he might ask himself, is not the loss of the reputation for integrity due to the behaviour of my own government? Have we set a proper example *in this matter?* Have we taken action against prominent Congressmen in governmental positions who have acquired reputations for corruption? Have we even ordered a proper enquiry when *bona fide* allegations have been made against important State ministers?

Have we established a procedure for such enquiries so that there can be no doubt about their impartiality? Have we not, on the other hand, in the very few instances in which any kind of investigation has been made at all, chosen to leave the decision to some members of the Working Committee of the Congress? Can such decisions inspire confidence in the large mass of the people, or serve as sufficient warning to Congressmen? Would it not be advisable at least now to lay down proper rules for enquiry by a tribunal whenever *bona fide* allegations against Ministers are made? Is it not correct that he who condones corruption, in fact commands it, and that therefore the government must bear the full responsibility for the loss of reputation of Congressmen and for the deleterious example set to the administration and the people?

Mr. Nehru is at his worst when he is bemoaning criticism. Buoyed up by the praises of his favourite Appleby, he strikes an attitude of bewilderment that despite great achievement, the people of the country should still criticise. He seems to fail utterly to understand that in any society, along with achievements, there may also go great faults, and that while there may be praise for the achievements, there must certainly, in the interests of health itself, be criticism for the faults.

He might ask himself, Because a hydro-electric scheme has begun to function successfully, is the corruption of some Ministers to be ignored? Because trains run to time, shall silence be kept about scandalous overpayments in military purchases? Should success in some community projects justify intrigue and wrong-doing in, for instance, the Planning Commission? Because in one or two years agricultural production showed an increase, is nothing to be said when over-estimation and bad management lead to lack of supplies for hundreds of thousands and tremendous suffering?

Mr. Nehru's statements are marked, alas, by the failure of introspection to penetrate deep enough. Always not much below the surface, comes the hard layer of complacency, blunting the instruments his mind uses, and so tiring him that thereafter he is happy to leave bad alone. Every great man must have some defects, but when the great man is Prime Minister of a country that has reached India's present stage of political and economic development, very few defects can be so costly and damaging a liability to it as his complacency.

9-5-1957

ERRORS AND REMEDIES

Some recent addresses by Congress leaders seem to show real perturbation at Communist advances in many parts of the country. That such advances were inevitable if the general behaviour of Congress leaders and some Congress policies continued unaltered has been pointed out by the student of affairs for many years.

The inexperienced, inflated by power, hardly ever wish to recognise unpleasant facts. They prefer to continue in the pleasant paths marked out by their own custom. The energy that should be devoted to reconsideration and self-reform they more usually divert to the decrial of those pointing out their errors and the reduction of their *influence as much as possible by curtailing* their venues and forums. Yet now that anxiety seems at last to be making some impact on the leading minds in the Congress, *it may be useful to state briefly the basic changes necessary* if the Communist onslaught is to be held, and the Communist forces enfeebled by the time the next elections come round.

The reliance of the Congress for its party and election funds on large business, especially speculative and not too scrupulous tax-evading business must cease. The Congress must become a party supported by regular small contributions from a large number of people. Time and again has it been demonstrated how this could be done. The advantage that would follow from live grassroots' work and contact with about twenty lakh members spread throughout the country, paying six rupees a year each, are too obvious to need elaboration. Becoming a real party of the people, the Congress would need no longer to truckle to the interests, often individual, of those who now are generally regarded as its patrons and because of whom, its actions in particular cases bring it into disrepute.

Honesty in every respect, adherence to public virtue, however unpleasant the consequences in family and community, must be the rule for all Congressmen in positions of power. Surveying the country as a whole, it is difficult to find more than a very few Congress dignitaries in Government and party with a reputation for complete disinterestedness. Almost invariably even to those admitted to be personally above reproach, there is tagged a compromising son, nephew, caste fellow, communal or regional bias. Public opinion holds that few *indeed of those who have been in ministerial* and other important political appointments since Independence have not bettered in material matters the condition of themselves or their appendages, directly or indirectly.

The unwillingness of the highest Congress authorities to have investigated impartially specific allegations against important Congressmen and their anxiety to maintain in power well-known figures, even though their past fame has now extended its limits to cover positively insalubrious areas of action, are very potent factors in the decline of public trust in the Congress. Methods for proper investigation, that while safeguarding those in authority from wild attacks would bring out the truth, were suggested many years ago, but no ears are so deaf as those that having heard, are determined not to heed.

Simplicity of living, the avoidance of ostentation and grandeur, these were what the Indian people expected of the Congress in power. Compliance with these would have brought to the Congress both respect and affection. But at Delhi and the State capitals are to be found in high party officials, Congress Governors and Ministers, a body of men who seem intent on vieing in their manner of living, personal and official, not only with the Lat and Counseller Sahebs of the immediate past, but even on going beyond them to the Grand Moghul, his Subedars and Rajahs.

The Adviser would put out the electric lights in the rooms he was not using, and later, all the lights in his bungalow, save perhaps one in the porch, but the residences of Ministers in many a state capital blaze with electric lights all night long. The Adviser was content with a brick compound wall built many years ago, painted yellow and white, but the Minister must replace it with ornamental stone at a cost of thousands to the public.

Luxury in office and home, and a high standard of amenities for the rulers, are perhaps regarded as some compensation for the poverty of the country ruled over.

Public functions and edifices must be on the same grandiose scale. Never, perhaps has there been such expenditure on mere showing-off as today; never such an efflorescence of building at the public cost in cities and towns all over the country.

Augustus found Rome of brick and left it of marble, but Augustus obtained the money from colonial areas abroad. He gave the Romans something for nothing. The Congress has neither Augustus' taste nor his capacity. It diverts the funds of the country, badly needed for essential purposes, to garish structures. Independence *of financial interests, true contact with the people, honesty* and praiseworthy simplicity, these must be the cornerstones of Congress behaviour, if it wishes to see no more Communist victories.

But is the Congress party truly distressed at Communist success? Is there not a certain ambivalence in the attitude of some of its most powerful men towards the Communists? Within the Union Government itself, one of the most important appointments, that of the Minister of Defence, is held by Krishna Menon, widely alleged to be a strong partisan and supporter of the Soviet Union and international Communism. This in itself boosts the morale of the Communist Party in India. Its members cannot but feel that right at the centre of power they have a real friend. Naturally, Krishna Menon has hardly ever had anything to say against the Communists. His chief, the Prime Minister, to whom he owes this high position, does from time to time attack the Communists but his wrath too is reserved for the Communists within the country.

Towards the Communists outside and the rulers of Communist countries and of countries held by the Communists, he carries sympathy to the point of rarely raising even an eyebrow at their most questionable activities. His policy, he says, is non-alignment, but as has been demonstrated on innumerable occasions, it is more non-aligned with the opponents of the Communists than with the Communists. This too must be a source of great encouragement to the Communists in India, and must expand their influence with the Indian people. The Communists can rightly say to themselves, "Mr. Nehru is not our direct friend. Declaredly he is even opposed. Yet he is particularly friendly with those from whom we derive not only our doctrine but also receive continuous guidance and assistance. He cannot but be aware of the links that bind us and them. Obviously then though not our strong friend, he is by no means an enemy."

The Indian people too, with their respect for Mr. Nehru's views, are impressed with the fact that he finds little wrong in the actions of International Communism, and accordingly, cannot hold a really adverse opinion about internal Communism. The presence in the cabinet of Krishna Menon combined with this policy then assists considerably Communist expansion. These together mean a softness towards the Communists, and a turning of the blind eye on their acts and deeds, of which they take the fullest advantage. It means the making by the Government of India of the Communist Party into a respectable political party for which Indian citizens can vote without feeling that they are thereby endangering their country's independence and their own personal rights under its Constitution.

The continuance of the Communist Government in Kerala is another indication of this same policy. There can be little doubt that if it were not for advice and persuasion from high quarters in Delhi, the Communist Government in Kerala would have been beaten long before this, thus blunting the spearhead of the Communist attack and diminishing greatly its influence. In these respects fundamental change is necessary, if the Congress is at all serious about holding the Communists.

The Congress has declared its determination to bring about a socialistic pattern of society in India. This necessarily involves checking exploitation, reducing glaring inequalities, providing work and minimum standards of living for all citizens. In the circumstances of India, it means the undertaking of a most gigantic and onerous task. Vested interests, economic and social, must be upset. Substantial opposition is inevitable. Yet the task must go forward and the people will judge the Congress even more by the sincerity and vigour of its efforts in these directions than by the success attained by them. Any falling back, any refusal to move, especially in economic policy, will affect Congress prestige and morale. The weak sisters, the persuaders to 'peace in our time, Lord' and the continuance of conditions as they are in economic policy, cannot be listened to, even if refusal leads to the parting of the ways with them.

Particular policies again, such as those about food or agricultural credit must, be based upon recognition and understanding of the actual position and real difficulties and needs. Food production does not increase because of the fixation of targets in the Planning Commission nor is agricultural credit adequately and widely distributed because the Planning Commission holds single village co-operative societies to be sacrosanct. Finally, the Congress must be prepared to revise unwise decisions, such as that of the maintenance of bilingual Bombay, which have enabled the Communists, taking advantage of genuinely popular grievances, to build up their strength in areas where it was negligible.

Mr. Nehru may seek to reassure himself and doubting colleagues by recalling that organisational weaknesses have been a recurrent feature of Congress history and have never really affected its existence or vitality, but he and other Congressmen would do well to remember that formerly there were always behind the Congress the appeal and strength of the national movement, and that its enemies were neither in craft nor in unscrupulousness ever equal to the deadly Communists.

24-4-1958

THREATENING TO RESIGN

One Congress member of Parliament may well have said to another, as they left the meeting on Saturday evening at which Mr. Nehru, never having intended to retire even temporarily, was 'reluctantly' persuaded not to retire, "the farce is over, let's go home and laugh."

Naturally being on the stage themselves they could not laugh while the performance was on. But the curtain having come down, there was nothing to prevent them displaying their feeling. If they were in the least sophisticated the display probably did not go beyond a wry chuckle. For they cannot but have realised that while participants in the farce, they were also the butts of the principal character.

With his show of humility and pretence of deferring to their view Mr. Nehru was only leading them on. In reality, between humility and him a great gulf yawned, and his decision not to budge even a trifle either in time or space, had been firm before he began to talk of being tired. Thinking of the mock pathos of his speech at the two abdication discussion meetings, Hamlet's line, slightly amended must have occurred to them, "How stale, flat, unprofitable are to us all the uses of his words."

Realising the true nature of the performance, it is still *worthwhile to examine* the *ostensible reasons* Mr. Nehru gave for staging this farce. Mr. Nehru's fastidious nature and delicate mind were greatly wounded by "a coarseness, a vulgarity" that had made its appearance *recently not only in the Congress but in the country.* The atmosphere was getting "murkier, heavier, more difficult for a sensitive person to breathe easily." Further a certain revivalist feeling, a certain communal feeling was creeping in even among Congressmen. So says Mr. Nehru, he thought he would get away from it all for a while and ponder.

That there is plenty of vulgarity and coarseness in this country, no one would deny. What is surprising is that Mr. Nehru should discover it only now, for it cannot have been hidden from even the most casual observer of the Indian scene during the last ten years. It has not had to be sought for in difficult and inaccessible places, it has flaunted itself openly in the Central and State capitals. Could anything be more coarse than the whole manner of behaviour of many of those in power since 1947? In the circumstances of the country could anything be more vulgar than their way of living?

When the professions made before coming to power and the practice followed thereafter are considered, the matter goes beyond vulgarity and coarseness. It then really appears as the problem of hypocrisy, of a double standard covering both life and action, affecting most de*trimentally the true interests of the country.* Mr. Nehru's responsibility for this state, physical, mental and spiritual can scarcely be denied. He has been the head of the ruling organisation and the strongest personality within it. *It is as it is because he has chosen to let it be as it is.*

Aside from the general question, let us consider Mr. Nehru himself in relation to this coarseness and vulgarity. Mr. Nehru lives in a palace surrounded by every luxury. Is not this great ostentation for the elected Prime Minister of a country as poor as this? Is not ostentation one of the worst forms of vulgarity? Does it not indicate a lack of that sense of proportion that is the essence of coarseness of fibre? Mr. Nehru accepts presents, he allows himself to be photographed with them and the donor as in the case of the horse presented to him. In a country where the tendency to give and take presents is so persistent and where the public interest demands the sternest attitude against it, is not this evidence again of that failure of a sense of proportion that is true vulgarity?

Mr. Nehru appears in Bombay in the course of the L.I.C. enquiry and pays publicly a glowing tribute to the then Finance Minister, Mr. Krishnamachari, knowing that one of the crucial issues of the enquiry is his responsibility. Does this show delicacy of feeling? Does it not rather indicate a bludgeon-like desire to force his own wishes on others? After the Commission's report, holding Mr. Krishnamachari responsible both in theory and in fact, Mr. Nehru assures him, and attempts to influence the public into believing, that "his part was of the smallest." Could anything have made the atmosphere "murkier and heavier"?

Mr. Nehru knows, indeed has proof positive, that Mr. Krishnamachari gave an evasive reply once, and lied thrice to Parliament in connection with the same L.I.C. matter. Yet in the debate, he stood up firmly for Mr. Krishnamachari, and since then has deliberately chosen not to make the position clear to Parliament and the public. Perhaps thus is created the atmosphere "for a sensitive person to breathe easily."

In fact, of course, accurate, if not sensitive, Indians and foreigners have little hesitation in describing the atmosphere in which Mr. Nehru breathes best as that of the autocratic court. Few dare tell the monarch the *truth. Those who do, pay for their temerity. Sooner or* later, the monarch, or if not he directly, his confidants, see to that, all in a very civilised way undoubtedly but none the less effective on that account.

The revivalism Mr. Nehru mentions is also in part a *reaction from the attitude he has adopted.* Mr. Nehru has refused to recognise the patent fact that India is a Hindu country. In consequence some Hindus naturally feel it necessary to assert that emphatically and in ways which will demonstrate it quite clearly. India being a *Hindu country does not make it any the less the home of* people not Hindus, who belong to it and are born in it. On the other hand at all times the Hindu has recognised the right of such people to live as citizens along with himself.

For communalism in the narrow sense, the encouragement in political and Governmental matters of attachment to a particular group, few are more blameworthy than the Congress, whose normal practice it has become to regard community as the most important element in the choice of its candidates for election. Again and again, has a man been selected, not because he is the best, but because his is a big caste or community, or because so many men from his community will vote for him. The Congress has also entered into many an electoral pact on a communal basis. In view of Mr. Nehru's position in the Congress, and his intimate knowledge of all that happens within it, he can scarcely plead exemption from responsibility for these lapses.

Mr. Nehru's is a complicated personality and it is difficult at any time to be certain about the real reason for any act of his. A guess, however, may be hazarded about the motive behind the not-too-entertaining farce he has just enacted. Shrewd politician as he is, he has had to recognise that in the last year or so he has made many mistakes and that criticism is growing among his more thinking political colleagues. He knows also that he suffers in their esteem because of the hold the 3 Ms, Menon (Krishna), Mathai (M. O.) and Mahalnobis (Prof.) seem to have upon him. They do not like his keeping shop by crony so much. He is further aware that the country as a whole is no longer so tremendously enthusiastic about him. As recent editorials in many of the papers show, the idea of his temporary departure caused no deep consternation.

He may thus have thought it best to move before any further strengthening of feeling, demonstrating to all and sundry by this manoeuvre the confidence the party has in him and its reliance upon him. Perhaps, too, he may hope that after this vote of confidence he can disregard altogether contrary views in foreign and domestic policy to which, however unwillingly, he has had to pay some heed upto now.

8-5-1958

PREVENTIVE DETENTION

The Indian Parliament stultified itself by not discussing fully and thoroughly the detention of Sheikh Abdullah under the Preventive Detention Act. A somewhat half-hearted attempt to raise the point was made by two members but they soon allowed themselves to be set aside and the session ended without the Government's having to offer any real explanation for this flagrant departure from the normal process of law. Assuming that Sheikh Abdullah had committed certain crimes, surely he could have been brought before a court and tried. Why just lock him up? If there was any apprehension that his trial in Kashmir would have aroused a great deal of feeling among the people and led to breaches of the peace, he could have been transferred on proper judicial orders to some other part of India and been tried there in the ordinary way. Not to have done this and just to have detained him raises grave doubts as to the *bona fides* of Government's action. Can it be that he is incarcerated not because of his acts but merely because of his opinions and because of the weight those opinions may carry with the people of his State if he is allowed to be free? The Government of India regards itself as and proclaims itself to be a liberty-loving, law-respecting Government. By and large, its professions are accepted at their face value both by its own people and by the people of almost all other democratic countries. When, however, it behaves in this fashion, even its admirers are compelled to look askance at it.

The breach of civil liberties involved in preventive detention is indeed a very serious matter. It affects every citizen, so that to say, "Well, after all, it is only Abdullah, you know" behoves no one. It may be Abdullah today; it may be you tomorrow. Unless a wrong done to any other citizen is felt as keenly as a wrong done to oneself, there is no guarantee for the maintenance of justice or liberty in a democratic society. The proper attitude must be that of Voltaire's saying, "I disagree entirely with your views, Sir, but I shall fight to the last drop of my blood so that you shall not be prevented from expressing them."

The Government of India would do well then to release Abdullah from preventive detention and if it has grounds for action against him, to arrest him under the ordinary law and to try him regularly and properly. There is in fact no course but this, open to a free Government aware of its moral responsibility.

It can scarcely be argued that the present is a time of grave and dire emergency, when extreme danger to the State can be pleaded. A free Abdullah may be very inconvenient to the Government in power in Kashmir and perhaps even to the Government of India, but inconvenience, however uncomfortable to high dignitaries, is not regarded in a free country as any reason for detaining people without proper trial and conviction. Abdullah's case is really a test of India's civilisation, and no amount of peregrinations by those who have locked him up in this fashion, to condemn him behind his back while they hold him in prison unheard, will be able to mislead the genuinely democratic element in Indian public opinion. Fortunately, as events have shown from time to time, this is by no means too insignificant to make its influence felt on the mass as a whole. In fact, it is the glory, or as some may consider, the saving grace, of India that however strong the sway over opinion of those in power, there is always room for some small voice to make itself heard in opposition, if it follows the dictates of conscience and reason.

It is not necessary to discuss in connection with this matter the general question of Kashmir and India. Whatever opinion may be held about that, however strong the belief that India's right to Kashmir is fully justified, that can furnish no excuse for Abdullah's detention without trial. Abdullah's being unquestionably an Indian citizen would make it all the more appropriate that he should receive the full protection of Indian law and not be treated as in any way alien to it. His previous detention for over four years was in itself a blot on the Indian escutcheon, which large numbers of speeches and Press conferences at Delhi and the United Nations could certainly not wash away.

All decent Indians were greatly relieved when he was freed. Now at last they felt the world would get an opportunity to forget the discreditable role the Government of India had played in this matter. Its claim as a respector of civil liberties would have a good chance of being accepted without reservation, and Indians in foreign lands would not have to hang their heads in shame and make excuses whenever Abdullah's name was mentioned. Obviously, however, the Government of India was not prepared to smoothen for long its own and its nationals' path in this manner. Within a very few months, it repented of its attempt at virtue and fell back into the cordial arms of accustomed sin, rejoicing and strengthening those opposed to this country and saddening and weakening its friends.

Such behaviour by any ordinary Government would be bad enough, but the Government of India has laid down and made public a particularly high standard for itself. If then it does not live up to it, its fault appears all the more glaring. Unless indeed it is prepared to have itself rightly termed hypocritical, it cannot help reviewing the action taken by it and ending the arbitrary detention of Abdullah.

22-5-1958

THE NEW FINANCE MINISTER

Among the reasons for which well wishers of this country are likely to be gratified by Mr. Desai's appointment as Finance Minister are some that have nothing to do with Mr. Desai. Since he would scarcely have taken over the portfolio for a short time or as a stop-gap arrangement, his choice means that the prospects of Mr. Krishnamachari's return to the Finance Ministry are so deferred as to become almost non-existent. This is a great gain, for despite the encomiums lavished upon Mr. Krishnamachari, the disadvantage to government and the public from his erratic, unbalanced personality and well-known capacity for running with the hare while hunting with the hounds, was very great. Mr. Desai's appointment also means a check to the hopes of Mr. Krishna Menon who was looking forward to a tenure in the Finance Ministry as the means of obtaining that hold over the machinery of government on the civil side which he needed to supplement his achievement in that respect on the military side. This, too, is a great gain, for more and more as the years pass by do competent and disinterested observers see increasing danger to the country in the increase of Mr. Krishna Menon's power.

At this juncture it is very important that Mr. Desai should do well in the Finance Ministry. The economic situation has been made extremely difficult. The lack of confidence about finance in the Congress since Independence has been a serious handicap to the adoption and execution of right policies. If Mr. Desai turns out to be a good Finance Minister, this deficiency may be repaired. As an old Congressman, he is bound to carry considerable weight in Congress circles and the probability of his obtaining support within the party for sensible and desirable objectives and methods is likely to be greater than has been the case in the past.

Mr. Desai has ample administrative experience. He is also intelligent enough to realise that he is not, and cannot now become, an expert in his own right on economics and finance, and must therefore be prepared to be a lay Minister considering informed views and deciding in the light of principle and practical knowledge. In the past, his judgment has on occasion been faulty, and he has not been noted for willingness to admit mistakes and rectify them. The State re-organisation muddle is a recent case in point, while an older one is the refusal to see that Prohibition in Bombay State is a failure. There are indications, however, of a mellowing of temperament and maturity of understanding which should enable him to avoid most errors of this kind in future. On the whole then the barque of his Finance Ministership seems set on a favourable course. Steering with care he ought not only to be able to avoid shipwreck, but to make port with reasonable speed and prosperity. Two great dangers, however, lie across his course. It would be both disingenuous and unhelpful to avoid mention of them.

Both the dangers appear to be manifestations of the quality of private virtue. Admirable as private virtue is, it sometimes conflicts with public virtue and then becomes a vice for the individual entrusted by the public with authority and office. Assistance to friends and loyalty to relatives—what could be more praiseworthy than these? Yet indulgence in these by a person in power is apt to become, and to be known as, favouritism and nepotism. Not only then is it necessary for the holder of authority to refrain from such indulgence. It is also necessary that he should so behave that it will be quite clear to the people that he does not indulge. It is not enough for such an individual not to exercise private virtue. He must also openly appear not to exercise it.

It would be idle to deny that there has been some speculation in recent years about the exercise of private virtue by Mr. Desai. As Finance Minister he must see that not the least ground remains for it to continue. It may, of course, continue in spite of that, for even those pure as the driven snow cannot escape calumny. But all reason for it ought at least to be avoided. Accordingly, in the case of relatives engaged in business it would be sound policy not to have them to stay in Delhi, nor to stay with them elsewhere, and even to suggest to them that they should refrain from doing business with any department of the government during this period. This may appear harsh, yet it may be very necessary in the public interest. The further step might be taken of letting it be generally known that no suggestions from close relatives are listened to, and also of letting it become widely apparent through action that no such suggestions are heeded.

The second danger arises from loyalty to friends. Here the position is perhaps more difficult. Mr. Desai, since becoming Minister in the Bombay government, and even more, since appointment as Treasurer of the Congress, is reputed to have been surrounded by a large number of friends of the speculative industrialist class. Not only the economic policies of government but its individual acts are often of great concern to these people and it would be quite natural for them to attempt to influence a member of government personally in directions favourable to them. The Finance Minister then has doubly to be on his guard in this matter. He must not only not allow himself to be influenced, but his behaviour must be such as to make it quite clear that he cannot be influenced. Briefly he must cease to be on friendly and intimate terms with such men. He must neither give nor accept on party account favours. All contacts, beyond the strictly official, must cease. However close past relations, there must be no attempt to interfere in favour of any of these individuals in any matter, judicial, semi-judicial, or executive. Once a general feeling of confidence about these two dangers has been established, Mr. Desai's burden as Finance Minister will be lightened. If on the other hand the attitude towards these is that of the man-of-the-world, "What does it matter? Why not?" type, public respect for the financial stewardship will certainly be lacking, and accordingly, efficiency in discharge will be impeded.

Mr. Desai's industry and capacity for administration can be of great value in the Finance Ministry at the present time. For apart from general economic and financial problems, there are quite a number of matters, the setting right of which would be greatly in the public interest. Take for instance the payment of bills by government. Is it at all necessary that they should generally be held up for months and sometimes even for more than a year? The result is substantial loss to the public, since the supplier noting this tendency raises the rate to cover what he is driven to consider the inevitable delay in payment. Take the proliferating of staff, hundreds of Assistant Secretaries, Under Secretaries, Deputy and Joint Secretaries and others, who by their very number hold up work rather than increase despatch. Take the evasion of taxes, especially the methods adopted by speculative big business and very busy professional men to escape them. Here is a field from which a rich harvest can be gathered to the great advantage both of the public fisc and the public purpose of moving towards equality. Take the mounting defence expenditure. Clearly all the more because of Mr. Krishna Menon's large-heartedness at the public cost, is it essential that the administrative mind should consider carefully both the necessity for the expenditure and whether proper value is being obtained for all the money spent. Take the extravagant building throughout the country, and the fact that while accommodation continues to be very crowded in Delhi, in a place like Nagpur well-built offices are going begging. In the present state of the country, among the most useful things the Finance Minister can do is to pay careful heed to the first canon of financial propriety, and ask himself with regard to every existing practice or new proposal, whether he as a prudent and reasonable man would consider it right to spend the money being spent or asked for, if it was his own and earned by himself, instead of being obtained by almost automatic process from a large mass of anonymous tax-payers.

Mr. Desai has the equipment, personal and political, to be a capable Finance Minister. If realising the dangers and opportunities, he acts to meet the former and seize the latter, he may be both an efficient and a very useful Finance Minister.

20-3-1958

THE BOMBAY STATE PROBLEM

Mr. Nehru now comes forward to tell us that the real reason for the insistence on the bilingual Bombay State is that Marathi-speaking Vidharba would otherwise have refused to join Marathi-speaking Maharashtra. "Vidarba," he says, "would have stayed out and also some other areas might have objected to their inclusion in Samyukta Maharashtra." He also wants to know what is wrong if Maha Gujarat and Samyukta Maharashtra stay together and adds, "If you make demands based purely on language, then it would bring about disunity in India." Proudly he proclaims: "I am a Maharashtrian while in Maharashtra and a Tamilian while in Tamil Nad."

How naive can Mr. Nehru be! Does he really think that at this stage of the dispute over linguistic division, he can escape facing the question on its merit by relying on such inaccuracies and ineptitudes? If so, he is sadly mistaken. The only effect of such vapourings is to exasperate still further the earnest-minded Gujarati or Maharashtrian. They cause him to hold that since his grievance is so little understood by even the highest in power, he can expect no redress of it through appeal to reason, and must make his arguments very loud indeed, before they can be heard.

While it is true that there was an element in Vidarbha which would have liked that area to be a separate state, the more important sections of the public in it had actually entered into an agreement with the Samyukta Maharashtra Committee to adhere to the new Maharashtra State which the Committee was sponsoring before the Government of India's Reorganisation Commission. The element opposed consisted of some rich businessmen, industrialists and landlords, while the sections in favour represented the bulk of the population. To say then that Vidarbha would not have joined a separate Maharashtra is clearly not correct. Fortunately not even Mr. Nehru alleges that Marathwada too might have been one of the unwilling areas referred to by him.

The crux of the problem from the very beginning has been Bombay City, basically the Government of India's desire not to let Bombay City form part of the separate Maharashtra province. Bombay, a separate City State!

When that was not found possible, Bombay, the capital of the larger bilingual State! But never, Bombay, the capital of the larger Maharashtra! All the manoeuvrings from the very beginning have been directed towards frustrating that purpose. Accordingly, the many tragic happenings of the past years. It is indeed the height of disingenuity on Mr. Nehru's part to attempt now to cloud the issue by pouring out other seemingly relevant excuses.

That the head of the government which has accepted distribution of all the territories of India, except the present Bombay State, on the basis of language, should declare that the adoption of that criterion would bring about disunity in India, is truly surprising. If indeed this apprehension was genuinely felt, why did Mr. Nehru and his government agree to the separation of Andhra from Tamil Nad, breaking up the fine old composite State of Madras? Why did they take away the Malayalee-speaking area of Madras and add it to the other Malayalee-speaking areas, to make the present Kerala, the only basis for which is language? Why did they add the Telugu-speaking portion of ancient, history-rich Hyderabad to Andhra? Why again did they think it necessary to bring into being a new Mysore State by adding together the territories inhabited by all the people who speak Kannada, taking away in the process areas from Bombay, Hyderabad and Madras? What, in Heaven's name, was the reason for all this? On what criterion was this action taken? Was it anything but language? Could it be anything else?

Surely when Mr. Nehru and the Government of India were bringing about these changes and getting Parliament to agree to them, they were not under the impression that they were assisting the progress of disunity in India. It cannot be that in the years since then their minds, observing the results, have been impressed with this belief, since nothing has happened in any of these areas to give ground for it. All over that portion of India that lies north of the Vindhyas, too, language has been the criterion of state formation, and any attempt to combine states with different languages has been stoutly resisted by the people of both. The fiasco of the Bengal-Bihar effort should still be fresh in Mr. Nehru's mind. If, thus, the language basis adopted in every part of India, except bilingual Bombay, has not caused disunity, there surely are no grounds for supposing that in this area alone, it will have such a dire result.

Mr. Nehru's theory could only be true if the nature of the people of Maharashtra and Gujarat was fundamentally *different from that of the people of the* other states of India. Those living in unilingual states presumably find no contradiction between their loyalty to their state and their loyalty to their country. The first they manage to contain within the larger second. Is there any reason to suppose that the citizens of Maharashtra and Gujarat will not be able to do the same? What is the special characteristic in them that will cause them to break away from India, destroying the unity of the country? Loyal Indians when living in the bilingual state, do they become disloyal merely by living in two *unilingual states? There is in fact not the least validity* in this argument, put forward as a cloak and cover for Government's unwillingness to apply to this area the principle it has steadfastly applied throughout the rest of the country. The most cursory examination discloses its inherent weakness.

Mr. Nehru's statement about changing his personality with the state he visits, identifying it in each case with his temporary residence, illumines the limitations of the thinking of a politician. Mr. Nehru is what he is, definitely a citizen of Uttar Pradesh of Kashmiri descent. He cannot, in any real sense, become a Tamilian when he goes to Madras or a Maharashtrian while in Maharashtra. He is not a chameleon physically or mentally, and his visits cannot affect his basic make-up, characteristics or natural reactions. If Mr. Nehru means anything at all by this rhetorical statement, he means that he has, in addition to his regional capacity, another capacity, that of a citizen of the whole country, and that, therefore, in that capacity he feels at home anywhere within the country. To an Indian, the hills of Darjeeling, the plantations of Coorg, the city of Bombay, are all equally parts of India, and therefore, in the wider sense, home. A single bilingual Bombay State, or two unilingual states, Maharashtra and Gujarat, constituted from it, can make no difference to this feeling. The latter do not militate in any way against it.

It is, indeed, time the Government of India cleared out of its mind the specious arguments about this matter that have been cluttering it up for so many years, and recognised the immediate necessity of taking action to divide the bilingual state into its two linguistic parts. As recent incidents show, the sands are running out. The interest of India as a whole lies in peaceful and prompt settlement. To talk about obtaining a majority for separation in the legislature, while insisting on maintaining strict party discipline and issuing mandates to vote against separation, is to argue from entirely false premises. The will of the people in this matter is clear to anyone who will take the trouble to ascertain what the people actually think. Mr. Nehru, his government and party, would be well-advised not to wait until the people can record their views with their votes in the next election. For if they do, the result may be not only most unwelcome to them but most harmful to the whole country.

28-8-1958

2

STUDY OF CALCUTTA

The City of Calcutta has never been particularly noted for the tranquil behaviour of its inhabitants. Today, however, the observant visitor finds an intensity of feeling far beyond the normal. Calcutta is even less at peace with itself than at any time in the past. A deep malaise seems to be eating into its system. Uncertainty, lack of confidence, fear—these appear to be the keynotes of its thought. Even the normally care-free are affected.

Calcutta has, of course, suffered more in the years since Independence than any other great city in India, Partition reduced its hinterland considerably. Its principal industry was cut off to a great extent from the areas where grew the raw material for its products. Refugees poured into it off and on for years, refugees of a kind unknown elsewhere, often totally unwilling to adjust themselves to a new life, resentfully anchoring themselves to their misery. More recently, low prices and lower exports for the products dealt in principally, jute, tea and coal, have led to considerable deterioration in the economic position, involving substantial reduction of profits, and losses, for many firms, with consequent shrinkage of opportunities of employment. All this time the cost of living has continued high, making life year after year more difficult for the middle class and the working man.

Psychologically, too, Calcutta suffers from deep-seated frustration. Very little of the trade or industry of this great port is in the hands of its native children. Almost all positions of importance in these spheres are held by people from outside the State or the country. In business, the Bengali does not come even a bad second. On the political scene too, his métier of the past, he feels he plays no great part now. None of the major Ministries at the Centre is held by a Bengali. The latest of Bengal's great men, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, resigned his Ministership because of the policies of the Central Government and even the striking rôle he played in opposition came to an end with his unfortunate death, the circumstances of which further embittered the people of Bengal against the Centre and authority generally. Within the State, the Bengali sees what is in effect a one-man Ministry, an energetic personality holding power almost alone, partly because there is none other of equal calibre to support him and partly because he chooses not to work with really able and good men outside his party.

Despite these and other difficulties, for a time the Government of Bengal seemed to have a sufficient grip on the situation. Though its efforts at amelioration were by no means always rightly-oriented or effective, it gave the impression that it was striving hard, and thus gained a certain amount of goodwill, in spite of the general feeling that it was not altogether averse to acting in the interests of some of the rich men who were its supporters, even when such action did not necessarily accord with the public good.

Now, however, all this goodwill would seem to have been dissipated. The conduct of the Government in recent months has been largely responsible for this. Its extremely undistinguished handling of the situation caused by opposition to the increase in tram fares, during the whole of which period the Chief Minister remained away, started the decline in reputation. Since then there has been further evidence of the same lack of ability to manage. Despite the Chief Minister's return, the Bengal Government has allowed itself to be so bullied and intimidated from time to time that it seems that all that is necessary now to bring about a change in policy is the gathering-together of a crowd of several thousands on the *Maidan*, the making of emphatic speeches and the sending of deputations to see the Ministers.

The Communists have naturally taken the greatest advantage of this state of affairs. Their usual exploitation of the difficulties of the people and the Government, economic and other, has received an added impetus from the lack of will displayed by the Ministry, and the consequent victories they have won over it have added greatly to their reputation, strength and influence. They seem to have been considerably assisted by the feeling in some Governmental circles that there was really no point in resisting them vigorously since even at the Centre there was now beginning to be a view among some quite influential Ministers that they were the party of the future and were bound to win in time.

The Communist doctrine of the inevitability of the success of the Communists was, it is said, being stated privately by at least one senior Minister. What then was the good of the State Ministry in its enfeebled condition attempting to hold out against the Communists? How could it even be sure that, if it did, it would receive the full and unflinching support that it had a right to expect from the Centre?

A variation of this feeling has already led to the intimidation of business executives by employee unions led by Communists, without evoking any counter-measures. The Calcutta Communist labour leader has added a new variation to the old Indian custom of sitting "*dhurna*". A large number of the employees march into an executive's room, sit down in front of him and say they propose to prevent him from leaving until he agrees to whatever demands they wish to put forward. From time to time, they urge him to sign a paper and, on his refusal, the union official, usually a Communist, each time delivers a short address on the sufferings of the proletariat and the blood-sucking habits of employers and their tools.

Such a session has in some cases lasted until the early hours of the morning; sometimes the telephone wires connecting the office are cut to prevent any contact with the outside; sometimes, aid from outside is refused by the executive, who, having little confidence in Government's ability to look after him later, prefers to bear his cross now. On occasion, the intimidation brings successful results from the point of view of the union. In any case, it increases the influence and prestige of the Communists and reduces that of the Government. What faith can one have in a Government which cannot protect one from such gross intimidation, of which one dare not even complain, lest worse befall? And how strong and well-organized must not the Communists be when they can with impunity behave in this manner?

The situation is indeed full of danger. In the circumstances of Calcutta, the future may well see a tremendous increase in Communist power in Bengal, unless immediate and vigorous steps are taken to put an end to the present Communist dominance. In this matter there must be the fullest co-operation between the State and the Centre. The State by itself can do little unless it receives the whole-hearted support of the Centre. There must be an unequivocal repudiation of any pro-Communist tendencies by the Centre. It must be made quite clear that the Centre regards as the veriest moonshine talk about the ultimate victory of the Communists and that for its own part it will deal severely with anyone, however high in authority, who attempts to shatter morale by such talk. The Centre must be exceedingly vigilant and must take all action allowed by the law against the Communists. It must also endeavour to meet Bengal's legitimate desire to have a person in whom the Bengalis can rightfully take pride in a senior Ministership at the Centre.

The State Government too must make up its mind to govern. Having decided, after careful consideration, on policy, it must carry it out determinedly, not allowing every stress *that appears to influence it into changing* direction. Dealing firmly with the Communists, it must create confidence in its ability to protect and to punish. *In consultation with the Centre, it must take such* measures as will reduce the strain upon the middle and poorer classes and give them a feeling of hope. It must attempt to remedy their grievances of its own accord, not wait until they have become so deep-seated as to cause an explosion. By its behaviour, it must make clear to the people that integrity inspires its every decision and act. Then only will it be enabled to meet the dangers that threaten not only it but the values it should cherish and the organized society that it is its duty to guard.

19-10-1953

THE PARTY'S STRATEGY

Recent disclosures about the real policy of the Communists and the proceedings of their conference at Madurai furnish ample proof, if indeed any proof were still needed, of the desire and capacity of the Communists to deceive the people of this country. Truly are they entitled to adopt as their motto the Persian saying about the fraudulent shop-keeper, "He shows wheat and sells barley!"

Since the elections, the Communists have laboured hard to get the people and Government accustomed to the idea of regarding them as an ordinary political party, prepared to take a full share in parliamentary life and to rely upon peaceful, constitutional methods for rising to power. Never was there a more mistaken notion. It is now clear that the Communist leadership has all along been of the view that the objectives of the Communists "cannot be realized by a peaceful parliamentary way" but "only through a revolution, through the overthrow of the present Indian State and the replacement by a People's Democratic State."

The Communists are prepared to resort to "all forms of struggle, including the most elementary, and to utilize all legal possibilities for mobilizing the masses." But they are certain that "in the present colonial set-up in India and the absence of genuine democratic liberties legal and parliamentary possibilities are restricted," and that accordingly for the replacement of the present State by the People's Democratic State "an armed revolution of the people" is necessary.

This is to be brought about by a combination of two basic factors, partisan war of the peasants and workers' uprisings in the cities. They do not go on immediately to partisan war because, unlike China, there are "specific factors in the Indian situation which are such that this weapon alone cannot lead to victory." These are the lack of a partisan army, a better developed transport system than in China, enabling the Government swiftly to concentrate big forces against partisan areas, and above all, the geographical position of India which prevents her having a friendly neighbouring State as a firm and powerful rear, such as the Chinese Communists after they had made their way into Manchuria found in the

Soviet Union. Accordingly, they conclude with regret that although partisan war is one of the major weapons in their armoury, it alone cannot ensure victory. It must be combined with the other major weapons—strikes *of the working class, general strikes and uprising in the* cities led by armed detachments of the working class.

How are these conditions to be brought about? The Communist Party must be strong and united. It must get all the democratic forces to work with it under its aegis in a united front. It must put out the slogan that the present Government must go and be replaced by a popular Government "representing the unity of the democratic forces, a Government that will break with the British Empire and carry out the programme of agrarian reform and democracy." It must lead the people in their day-to-day struggle *and take them forward step by* step, so that through their own experience they come to realize the necessity and the inevitability of armed rebellion.

While utilizing all legal possibilities, it must strengthen enormously the existing illegal apparatus of the party. It must take over the working class, creating political consciousness in it and building a powerful underground movement with factory and workshop committees as its nuclei. The best and most advanced elements in the working class must be recruited to the Communist Party. In the rural sector, the aim must *be to foster local discontents* and grievances to such a pitch that whole tracts turn into warring partisan areas. When this happens, the workers in the cities in vital industries and in the transport system must hamper and paralyse the onslaught of the enemy, that is, the Government, by mass strike actions so that the revolutionary forces operating in the *partisan areas cannot be encircled and annihilated.*

And the Communists look forward to this happy consummation: "With hundreds of streams of partisan struggles, merging with the general strikes and the uprising of the workers in the cities, the enemy (the Government) will find it impossible to concentrate his forces anywhere and defeat the revolutionary forces but will himself face defeat and annihilation. Even inside the armed forces of the Government, the crisis will grow and big sections will join the forces of revolution."

These then are the real aims of the Communists and the general methods by which they propose to bring them about. The particular tasks specified are the building up of mass organizations and the building up of democratic fronts. The Communists hold that the political crisis in the country is deepening. Though the Congress has a majority in many States, yet it is unable to give stable government because of the very deep internal dissensions in its own ranks, "dissensions which are a product of the utter fiasco of policies of the Congress."

"With uncertainty about the future of the Congress régime itself becoming widespread, occupants of ministerial office use their position for making money, for distributing jobs and contracts and rouse the jealousy of their less fortunate colleagues. The result is the hurling of vile charges against one another, intensification of factional rivalries and intrigues, groupings and regroupings." In this and the fact that the Congress by its own actions is making the people more and more disillusioned with it so that even general supporters stand out against it on particular issues, the Communists see their main chance of building mass organizations and united fronts.

In other words, the absence of ordinary integrity among those who govern and the inability to give sound basic administration to the people are, according to these most dangerous and careful opponents, the weakest points of the present Government, points of which their enemies take the fullest advantage and because of which they feel confident of rallying to their side sufficient strength to attain their objective of an armed revolution. Men in power and authority, men concerning themselves deeply with the state of the whole world, might find it advantageous to devote much more of their attention to considering carefully this simple proposition lest concentrating raptly on council halls far away, they find themselves walking into the deep well apparent to all but themselves at their feet.

It appears from these disclosures that the Communist Party's conception of the united fronts, into which it is continuously attempting to draw all other parties, even dissatisfied members of the Congress itself, is, whatever it says, a combination in which it has the principal voice and which it can use for its own benefit. Its anxiety that such a front shall not develop a personality of its own or in any way detract from that increase in the prestige and influence of the Communist Party that it is designed to bring about, is clear from its answer to even so loyal a fellow-traveller as Dr. Jaisoorya, who seems to have been constrained to protest against the practice to impose somehow Communist Party leadership on every front at all strategic levels. He is also obviously upset by what he terms 'the actions and behaviour of lesser lights with Petty Commissar Mentality" and has even gone to the extent of saying that the Communist Party's policies are determined by "Moscow or Comintern or Cominform," in other words "by extraterritorial loyalties."

The Communist Party of course rejects all his contentions with scorn. It is also extremely critical of his view that all constructive work should not be regarded as mere reformism and that "relief is the real and immediate thing while revolution is a distant necessity." Its spokesman says: "Nor do we consider that revolution is a distant necessity. Unfortunately for us though the revolution is a crying necessity, we are not in a position to carry it through as soon as we desire or as the crying necessity demands."

Equally little is the satisfaction he gets to his request that the Communist Party eschew violence unreservedly. Nothing of the kind, he is told, and for his enlightenment is quoted: "It is the attitude and practice of the exploiters of the people, who are determined to protect their interests by total suppression of the people and at any cost, that drive the masses to the different methods of struggle and for self-defence. It is therefore wrongful to indulge in loose talk about violence and non-violence in dealing with basic problems of the life of the people." There is a sufficient lesson in these united front answers to all those, including members of the Government, who may sometimes feel enticed to work on any matter with the Communists.

These then are only some items from the rich treasure-trove of the disclosures. Residents of Calcutta, some of whom were highly indignant at the suggestion that the Communists took a very active part in the disorders of last year, may like to note that the Communist Politburo looks upon what it terms the Calcutta "struggle" with special pride, classes it as "above all" and says: "The Communist Party plays an increasingly important rôle in the struggles, which increase the prestige and influence of the Party and draw the masses towards it." Again, those innocents who insist on arguing that the Peace Movement and the Indo-Soviet and Indo-China Friendship movements are not Communist façades, may think it worth while to be assured by the Politburo in its review of achievements that "noteworthy progress has also been registered by our comrades working in close co-operation with non-party people, including Congressmen, in the Peace Movement and the movements for Indo-Soviet and Indo-China Friendship. It is at the same time being increasingly realized that these movements cannot become real, nation-wide mass movements, so long as trade unions, kisan sabhas and other organizations are not drawn in their active functioning."

A word, it has been said, is enough to the wise. Here are two whole sentences.

28-1-1954

INCREASE OF INFLUENCE

Competent observers surveying the Indian scene are compelled to conclude that not only has Communist influence not declined in the last three years but that it has increased appreciably and is steadily increasing.

They must also hold that while it has grown among workers, industrial and agricultural, *the increase here is* insignificant compared to that among the intellectual and middle classes. The reasons for these unsatisfactory *developments are of three kinds—ideological, organiza*tional and political, the first being less important than the second and the second than the third.

The classical Communist doctrine with its certain answer to every problem undoubtedly offers a haven of refuge to the constantly questioning—and consequently often weary—mind of the Indian intellectual. Not his to ask henceforth; his only to obey. The relief is blessed, indeed, and quite a number are fascinated by the prospect. Later, among these as well as among others who have never completely accepted the doctrine though paying great deference to it, sometimes questions still arise and cannot, in spite of much effort, be put aside.

The majority then accept the discrepancy, however serious, or the contradiction, however complete, as part of the necessary sacrifice for the cause. "I see it intellectually, but cannot accept it emotionally," said a deeply-entangled fellow-traveller once. "To the true lover, his beloved is always perfect." The power of quick change which the ideology promises is, of course, a great attraction to the intellectual as well as to the middle-class man. Both, moreover, see themselves as making the change and at the top in the changed circumstances, very adequate compensation for their frustrations in the present time. The ideology's appeal to the Indian working classes rests in the benefits promised, rather than in any theory, though of course, it is in their name that the party seeks power and perhaps they feel some exaltation because of that.

More important, however, than the ideological factor in the increased growth of Communism has been the improved organization of the Communist Party and its activities. Clearly, large funds have of late become available to it. It has also had ample opportunities of receiving constant advice and guidance, directly from the world headquarters of Communism, Moscow, and through the Asian directional bureau in Peking. The internal disputes that, in the form of debates lasting for months, used to slow down the party's activities, are now adjudicated upon by outside authorities speedily and the proper course indicated with so little loss of time that no excuse is left for diversion of energy to any other activity except that ordered from above.

The secret action technique has been perfected, including the infiltration into hitherto, unsecured organizations, and the getting-together with influential people, some even opposed to Communism, for what appear to be quite innocuous purposes, with a view to using them and the front so built up for increasing Communist influence. The conspiratorial apparatus has been widened to cover newspaper offices, universities and colleges. So effective has it been in some of the last two that the prevalent climate of opinion brought to the mind of one well qualified to judge nothing so much as that of Chinese Universities in the last days of the Kuomintang, the anticipation, almost joyful, of the rise to power of the Communists and the refusal to hear anything on the other side.

While this is the effective organizational picture on the Communist side, on that of the non-Communists, there is hardly any at all. Even the need for opposition is in fact not clear to many. Their liberal minds revolt at the thought that any special action is necessary to spread the civilized ideas of freedom, civil liberty, the rule of law and to show how these are threatened by the onward march of the Communist creed. They take these principles so much for granted that it seems to them antiliberal to attack the Communist creed, later than theirs in time, more especially since it too uses the same terms and pays ostensible homage to the same ideals. They do not wish to believe that its practice is very different from its professions, and that, far from being progressive and a development of freedom, it is in fact retrograde and a reversion to tyranny. They are completely taken in by Communist fronts, so that respectable and influential citizens feel no hesitation or compunction in lending the weight of their names and positions to organizations, membership of which is considered even by the Labour Party in Britain sufficient reason for expulsion. They do not wish the most obvious dangers to be pointed out to them, for the thought of danger makes them feel uncomfortable, and above all else they value comfort, mental perhaps even more than physical.

The growth of Communist influence owes more, however, to the political reasons than the organizational ones. These fall into two groups, international and national. The successes of the Communist Party abroad, especially in the establishing of its own Government in China, and in the preventing of the defeat of the Chinese armies in Korea, its victories in Indo-China, sealed by the Geneva pact, have reacted most beneficially on the prestige of the Communist Party in India. This is, of course, quite understandable, for the close connexion between the Communist Party in India, its sister parties in the U.S.S.R., China and elsewhere, and the world Communist organization, is clear to the mind of most thinking men. "The strength of my brother, though fifty miles away, and of my father, though a hundred miles away, is still my strength," says an ancient verse.

The prestige of the local party is further added to by the great appreciation of the Governments of the U.S.S.R. and China that finds expression so often from the External Affairs Ministry at Delhi and by its championing of the causes dear to them both in its own capital and in international bodies abroad. To strength is thus added moral support, for the citizen feels: "Not only are the Communists strong, they are also right. Our own Government, which opposes them here, itself says so."

Internally, too, even at this late stage, there seems little realization in Government that in this matter it owes a duty to its citizens which cannot be discharged merely by making a few speeches against the local Communist Party at election time. The Communists are not idle between elections; their activities, legal and illegal, propaganda and conspiratorial, are incessant and continue always at full pitch. While a State must see that the protection of the laws is made equally available to each individual and the rights of no man are trampled upon, yet there is much that a Government can lawfully do to counteract these activities.

It can, for instance, make clear to its citizens its complete disapproval of the many fronts into which they are inveigled by the Communists. It can make its displeasure clear to the many prominent fellow-travellers who often play a more useful part for the Communists than members of their own party. Its Ministers can discountenance them. It can take steps to see that no persons in anyway connected with it or its party get involved in these fronts. Remembering the Communist tenet that good is only that which helps the cause of the party and bad only that which retards it, it can make certain that no institutions managed by it, receiving aid from it or working on grants given out of its funds, serve as centres for the entertainment and activities of Communists and fellow-travellers, foreign and internal.

It can keep a close and vigilant watch on the receipt and expenditure of funds by the Communists. Realizing that it is the duty of every foreign Communist to bring all possible influence to bear in support of the cause of *his local brethren, it can restrict greatly, if not curtail* altogether, the stream of delegations from Communist countries that seem to have become so recurrent a feature of the Indian scene. It can see that its servants do not do propaganda for foreign Communists, Governments or peoples, thus helping the Communists at home. All this at least it can do without in anyway overstepping the bounds of its own duty. In fact, if it does not do at least this, it will not be fulfilling its obligations to the large mass of the people entrusted to its care. There is a time when a wise Government can perhaps afford not to act, but with us that time is now past. In further delay there lies much danger.

21-2-1955

ON THE SMALL HOOK

Most of the people who keep on telling us very earnestly that the recent visit of the Soviet leaders to this country indicates no real change, that the great welcome accorded to them was merely a reply to the reception Mr. Nehru got in the Soviet Union, that their statements here attacking their cold war opponents had no special purpose but were just normal Soviet diplomatic behaviour, that their speaking with such emphasis in favour of India on the Kashmir issue was the result of genuine conviction and must equally be taken only at its face-value, are just whistling to keep their courage up.

They know that something really important has happened, they have a feeling of apprehension about it, but they do not wish to examine its significance carefully, for if it really turned out to be what they have some suspicion it might be, the shock to them would be very great. So they say to us, "Please, please, there's nothing very much in all this. Do leave it alone. It really doesn't matter." And, indeed, there are few things one would leave alone so readily, if only the public interest did not demand that it be examined.

The Prime Minister has no doubt about the significant nature of this visit. He terms it "epoch-making". Obviously he regards it as bringing into being, and marking the beginning of a new epoch, and a new epoch clearly would not be new if it did not bring about striking change.

The visit, then, it may be concluded, was designed to, *and is likely to, bring about change in many directions*, not least in foreign policy.

From the point of view of the Soviet Union in particular and the Communists in general, after the tour this country is, to use the language of Soviet espionage, "on the small hook." It is sufficiently compromised with the Soviet Union and the Communists to be led confidently much further. Careful "study", watching, guiding and developing in the right direction, is the next step, until it can be safely put into "the net", when with a sigh of satisfaction and relief at a great task well accomplished, on its dossier kept at the Foreign Office in Moscow can be endorsed the word "Nash", meaning "Ours" or "It is ours."

The tremendous welcome given them, the lead taken by the Government in organising it, encouraged the Soviet leaders greatly. Finding themselves so acceptable and cherished, they naturally felt they had better use this excellent opportunity to make clear to the world our *deep attachment to them*, our agreement with their views on world problems and policies, and on the opinions they hold about the West.

One part of their joyous task was to create as deep a rift as possible between us and the West and they set about it with zest and enthusiasm, helped not a little by the Prime Minister's accord with their opinions on many points and by our general reluctance to interfere, even by hints, with the free self-expression of honoured guests. The second part of their task was to make us think of them as simple, friendly, benevolent folk, informal and kindly, seeking but to help. Hence their genial discussions with all and sundry, their Gandhi caps and *tilaks, their continuous smiles. They sought* to grapple our hearts to theirs with silken strings, and have at least been successful in reducing suspicion to a minimum and in evoking great cordiality. The people, encouraged by the Government, seem to have taken them almost at their own estimation, accepting their explanations, forgetting their past, their system and their aims.

From the point of view of the true interests of the Government of India and this country, the tour has been most harmful. The principal oppressors and destroyers of the values to which the Government of India, in accordance with its Constitution, should strongly adhere, the principal champions and representatives of those which the Government of India, in accordance with its Constitution, is bound to abhor, have been received by it with acclamation and rejoicing. A Government, the leaders of which have time and again proclaimed their belief in the sharp distinction between good and evil and in the doctrine that the end never justifies the means, has embraced and acknowledged as its loving brother, another, the basic tenets of whose creed are that no action is either good or evil except as it helps or does not help the onward march of the Communist party, and that any means, however despicable and evil they are in the sight of the normal citizen, are completely justifiable, if the end serves that same purpose of advancing Communist aims. No formal signing of Panchshila agreements, no verbal declarations that Communism is not for export, can get over these facts, nor can it be forgotten that these same smiling, informal, chattering gentlemen were among the foremost lieutenants of the dread Stalin, and along with him, were responsible for the most cruel destruction of the lives and homes of millions of their countrymen.

Regretfully it must be admitted that the policy of the Government of India in this respect is based on a series of false assumptions. Despite the clear facts of Stalin's life and deeds, the Prime Minister termed him a "man of peace" when he died, and Indian foreign policy seems to have been built almost wholly on the idea of the Communists and the world current in some circles in the thirties, according to which the Soviet Union was the progressive state and the only hope of a decadent world. It could not therefore do anything really wrong. To its faults one must be blind, to its virtues very kind. From this basis, it does not take long to move to acceptance of the view that the Soviet Union is a really peace-loving state, that it is never the aggressor, that it seeks no conquest or expansion, that it hates imperialism and can just not bear colonialism, that if only other nations would not trouble it, peace would be assured throughout the world.

Nor do facts seem to make much difference to this imaginary picture. The taking over of the whole of East Europe by the Communists, the maintenance of enormous forces, the holding down of numerous Asian countries, the rejection of all measures, like the Open Skies proposal, that would make a real contribution to disarmament—all these and many more do not seem to affect the estimate already made. Nor even does the fact of completely despotic government, with all its attendant evils, within the country of the Soviets and wherever the Communists hold sway, seem to matter at all to the democratic rulers of our land. Whatever the facts, they will give the benefit of the doubt to the Soviet. Towards it their judgment will always be gracious.

It is remarkable that in spite of this mentality, a balance in deeds has been preserved. But now, the end seems to be close. Some fatal move may soon be made, or even without any move being made, it may just be generally understood that this country stands on the Soviet side. Once that happens—it is to the great advantage of the Communists to produce that impression so that they will spare no effort to make it happen—cordial relations with the West will become extremely difficult. As a consequence, our dependence on the Communists will increase, from which will follow a further worsening of relationship with the West, with a further increase in dependence on the Communists.

Thus, gradually but at an ever-increasing pace, we may find ourselves part of the Communist bloc, associates, though at a lower level, of the totalitarian Government of the Soviet Union and, since we lack military strength both in comparison to it and to China, rapidly declining to the position of a satellite, carrying out orders, couched as requests to begin with, and as orders, plain and simple, to end with.

To this situation, there is only one remedy. Difficult as it may be to disentangle ourselves from the Communists at this late stage, it must be done if we are to remain a free state. Let us get off "the small hook." If the West has any wisdom at all, it will not only not embarrass us in the process, but will tactfully and unostentatiously give us necessary assistance. But whether it does or not, it is essential for our own sake to recognise at least now this imminent danger, and to deal with it promptly and effectively.

20-12-1955

THE CHALLENGE OF CIVIL WAR

The ominous words "Civil War" have been uttered for the first time in this country. As was to be expected they came from Communist lips. They came not just as an expression of bravado. They represented no mere ebullition of feeling. They were spoken in dead earnest. After mature consideration, they rose to the surface of the Communist mind and could no longer be held back. The time seemed ripe to administer this blow; its effect on the enemy would be formidable. Stalin's Indian "shock-brigade" saw victory clearly ahead as it delivered this thrust.

The potent spear was handled by the skilled Comrade Nambudiripad. For this dread task no better champion could be found in the Communist ranks than this crafty warrior, with the laurels of Devicolum still thick upon him. Gladly did he answer the call; gladly did he announce to the people of Kerala in particular and to all Indians in general the Communist challenge and ultimatum, "Work with us; don't combine against us. If you do, be prepared for war, civil war, fratricidal war, war continuous, war endless, until as in China, victory crowns our arms."

Of apologists to tone down the significance of his words, there will soon be no lack. The great names of the fellow-travelling world, the sacred cows against whom it is anathema to argue, are no doubt even now preparing their statements. In a short while, the country will be told that to interpret Comrade Nambudiripad in the sense in which he spoke is to be perverse, that in fact he meant no harm at all, that really when one went into it carefully, wasn't there a great deal of good sense in what he said, that after all the Communists were also Indians, that democracy and civil liberty were merely matters of interpretation, that it surely was reasonable to work with the Communists rather than to oppose and antagonise them.

Nor will the apologists be confined to non-governmental ranks. From within the innermost ranks of Government itself may come forth pronouncements on the essential reasonableness of the Kerala Comrade's plea. Vishinsky's 'honest' man, the true internationalist as defined by Vishinsky, the individual who regards the helping forward to success of the Soviet Union and the Communist cause as his one real duty—is he not to be found in the seats of the most powerful at Delhi? And will he and those under his influence permit the Indian people to realise the full significance of the Communist threat? Will he and they rather not choose to obfuscate the issue? He, of course, in private discussion with colleagues and men of influence can always fall back on the argument that, according to some sources, has had not a little to do with the maintenance, and increase, in power of the Kerala Government upto now, the argument that we need Soviet help in the Security Council when Kashmir is discussed and that such help is not likely to be forthcoming if their adherents in this country are not permitted to function as the Government in at least one State.

Whatever the glosses Communist sympathisers and those misled by them choose to put upon this important statement, it is well that the ordinary citizen should understand its real import. For him Communist rule is bound to be a period of bitter oppression and extreme arbitrariness in which the individual will count for very little. The country in which he has expressed himself freely during the last few years will be transformed into the Police State where the wisest use to which the tongue and pen can be put is silence. He will compulsorily "volunteer" for everything his masters want him to do, will live in the midst of informers and will learn to regard distrust as the basic quality necessary for survival.

Propaganda-fed visitors to Communist lands talk glibly about the improvement of the lot of the people there, yet as the violent examples of Poland and Hungary have shown, a free election in any Communist country must mean the end of the regime. Those who have had experience of it by living under it would, if they could, unhesitatingly condemn it. Of its unworthiness, what better proof can there be?

The state of India today warrants the Communist challenge. The feebleness displayed by the party in power, its inability to prevent its highest ranks from being infiltrated, the confused thinking of most of its members on this vital issue, the unwillingness of the leadership to take a strong line, its continuous efforts to appear on the friendliest terms with the Soviet Union and Communist China, the readiness displayed by the Socialists to work with the Communists whenever it suits them, their total lack of principle in this matter, their failure just as much as that of the Congress to educate the people about the true nature of the Communist menace—all these combined lead the Communist Party of India and probably, their guides and friends abroad, to believe that the time has come for a decisive move forward. Their contempt for the Indian politician and intellectual is such that they think a strong threat will in itself have considerable effect.

Comrade Nambudiripad and his colleagues can be imagined saying to themselves: "These people fight! Hardly likely! The mere idea of civil war will so unnerve them that all they will be thinking about will be compromise. And then, the game is ours. Popular Fronts, the Salami method, the well-tried expedients that have led us to the pinnacle in so many lands."

What would a firm and clear-thinking Central Government do in the face of such a threat? It would, whatever its past errors, forthwith cleanse itself, throwing out from its ranks without compunction or hesitation crypto-Communists and Communist sympathisers. It would take steps to make those in leading positions in the forces realise that it was wide-awake and expected fully non-political behaviour from them and the men under their command. It would turn all its publicity machinery whole-heartedly against the Communists.

It would conclude that when the head of a State Government talked of "civil war," the time had come for that Government to go, and would direct its energy to seeing that it was defeated in the Legislative Assembly or would dismiss it, explaining fully the reasons to the people, and if an alternative government was not practicable for the time, have President's rule. Since many of the Communist leaders of Kerala have had a great deal of experience of underground work and are presumably, in view of the threat uttered, well-prepared, not having been likely to waste the time during which they have been in power, the second course would probably be best. It would make a special effort not only in Kerala but throughout the country to win the confidence of the people by banishing from its midst corruption and nepotism, meeting the grievances of the people sympathetically and attempting to establish genuinely good Government. Not hankering after Soviet or Chinese support in its own quarrels it would be truly non-aligned in foreign policy. It would, by its thinking, proclamations and actions make the Communists realise the folly of their threat, and if they did not see its futility and still wanted war, it would give them war until their bellies ached and they cried out for mercy. This a firm and clear-thinking, a wise and courageous government would do. Have we such a government?

19-6-1958

3

THE POPULATION

Mr. R. A. Gopalaswami has rendered distinct service by drawing pointed attention in his census report to the *necessity for preventing unrestricted rise of population.* He could quite easily have confined himself to doing his census work competently and producing the usual interesting report. Besides doing that, however, he has chosen to bring into the open a subject of the greatest importance to this country and its people. Departing from the caution regarded as typical of the civil servant, he has taken, in the public interest, the risk of being plunged into controversy. He deserves our hearty congratulations and warm thanks.

The main point of his thesis is that if population control on a country-wide scale is not undertaken now, our latter end will be infinitely sadder than our former. Living conditions will deteriorate and the *Indian citizen thirty* years hence will find himself much worse off than at present, lacking both food and other necessities. *Population will have outstripped resources very significantly.* He therefore suggests that, while increasing our production to the utmost possible, we should aim at not exceeding a maximum of 45 crores against the present census figure of 36. This, he thinks, should not be difficult of attainment, if only families will limit themselves to three children. Having more than three, "improvident maternity" as it is strikingly termed, should definitely be avoided.

The necessity for population control has been clear to knowledgeable people for quite a long time. Even Governmental authorities have accepted the proposition that, if there is to be any increase in the standard of living, the population must be held. The draft outline of the Five-Year Plan, issued by the Planning Commission in July 1951, said: "Unless measures are initiated at this stage to bring down the birth-rate and thereby to reduce the rate of population growth, a continuously increasing amount of effort on the part of the community will be used up only in maintaining the existing standards of consumption." The final report of the Planning Commission in 1952 also referred to the need for holding the population, because, "if population is growing at a certain rate, the total national output has to be raised at the same rate merely to maintain existing standards of income and consumption. This means that not only will so much less of further additions to national income be available for ploughing back into investment, but a part of what is ploughed back will be taken up by the capital equipment required to maintain *per capita* incomes constant in the following period."

And yet, when Mr. Gopalaswami very rightly stresses the urgent need for control, a spate of argument bursts forth challenging the basic necessity itself. Even the Prime Minister, who signed both the reports of the Planning Commission and who on several occasions in the last two years has spoken about the dangers of increasing population, seems now, if his remarks at a recent Press conference are any indication, to feel doubts and to assert once again the view he had expressed previously that increase in food production and exploitation of natural resources would be a sufficient answer to rising population.

A great deal of the argument that has arisen now seems to be centred on whether the estimates of increased food production in the next 30 years taken by the Census Commissioner *are not* too low and therefore whether a much larger population than his maximum of 45 crores cannot really be sustained. The reasons he has given for his estimate seem to be sound, but even if they are cautious, the merits of the case are not affected. Is the standard of living of the average Indian so satisfactory that we should be happy to see it continued at the present level for the next thirty years? For any kind of reasonable life, ought it not to rise by at least its own measure? The leeway to be made up even for that is in itself very great. Increase in population obviously adds to the handicaps.

Nor is it merely a question of foodgrains. Consider employment, about which there has been so much anxious questioning recently. At present the total number of people employed in the factories of the country is about three million. Merely doubling the factory population would mean trebling the existing industrial equipment, as there is generally some surplus labour in most Indian factories, and for recently-designed equipment less labour is needed in most cases. A capital investment in industry of Rs. 14,000 per worker is not in present conditions too large, so that giving work to three million extra men means an expenditure of Rs. 4,200 crores. The absorption of a small portion of the increase of population thus raises problems of such dimensions that, even with the most strenuous efforts, satisfactory results will be difficult. The same problem arises in regard to necessities, clothing, housing and education. Only the extremely complacent would hold it possible to meet the onset of the increasing population by exploitation of resources and natural development, while at the same time providing an increased standard of living.

There can be no doubt that a population rising as rapidly as estimated is likely to bring about substantial lowering of the already low standard of living. Now the submerged 90 per cent of our people is rightly not content to remain even today in its submerged condition. Is there any point in not attempting to alter a population trend which must at the best mean the continuance of present conditions?

In this matter the time for argument is definitely past. Action is overdue, action not in the sense of the limping hesitation of the Planning Commission, with its Rs. 65 lakh budget for five years, but a real country-wide campaign involving an expenditure of about Rs. 10 crores a year to spread knowledge of the simplest methods of birth control throughout the country. The working out of a proper plan with a small clinic in every taluka town and mobile units to tour the countryside ought not to take more than a few months. Propaganda is necessary, nor is the propaganda likely to be misunderstood. The tragedy of the unwanted child whose coming makes life intensely more difficult both for the earlier children and for the parents is never more poignant than among the poorest.

It must be realized that if this problem of population increase is not solved, all our efforts in other directions are bound to end in nothing. This is the basic question, and it must be treated as basic.

23-11-1953

POPULATION CONTROL

Far fewer people will dispute today than five years ago that among the most important problems of this country is the holding of the population. Some will go so far as to assert that it is the most important problem, and that the future of both economic welfare and the political *stability that follows from it* depend upon its right and early solution, since if numbers continue to increase at the current rate, the result of all possible effort at economic development can at best be the maintenance for the people as a whole of the present extremely low standard of living.

This view being certainly correct, the efforts at population control that are being made amount to attempting to sweep the sea back with a broom. While the Government and important sections of public opinion are impressed with the gravity of the situation, that gravity has not impinged upon their minds with sufficient intensity to move them to really appropriate effort. The funds provided up to now for all population control, propaganda, and action, 65 lakhs in the First Five-Year Plan and 4 crores in the Second Five-Year Plan, are sufficient indication of this. What is needed is a vigorous, large scale, country-wide propaganda and *action programme*. What is given are tentative, apologetic, comparatively insignificant schemes. A true appreciation of the importance of the problem and its magnitude would lead *to a very different approach. There does not seem to be* sufficient understanding of the fact that in this matter as in many others the best is the enemy of the better. That there is no completely certain method of controlling birth, and that comparatively surer methods involve a cost beyond the bearing of the bulk of the people, need not prevent wide-scale dissemination of a simple low-cost method, likely to have, say, 75 per cent efficiency against the 90 per cent of the more expensive methods. Experiments are always worthwhile and can go on. But looking forward to their results ought not to be a bar to action meanwhile.

As suggested many years ago, the country ought to be covered by a network of population control centres, there being at least one for every taluka. The centre should have as a minimum staff, a trained nurse, and should be provided with a mobile van. The nurse would keep on visiting every village in the taluka in turn, gather together the women and explain simply the easiest and least costly method of birth control. While sometimes resistance may be encountered, on the whole it has been found that women over-burdened with children are favourably inclined even in rural areas towards the idea of not having any more. In fact this is the heart-felt wish of many a poor and oppressed mother, and she is likely to be only too grateful if shown a reasonably simple method of attaining her desire.

The wiser propagandist will naturally not claim perfection for her recommendation. She will state its limitations, but at the same time mention sufficiently the probability of its success. Such a network might cost about 10 to 15 crores a year. It would have to be in existence for at least six years. Thereafter it might be expected that the knowledge would be passed on by the recipients themselves to their daughters. Assuming, however, the necessity of continuing it for 10 years, the total cost would still be not more than a maximum of 150 crores, by no means a very large sum in view of the benefits likely to accrue from it.

Japan, compelled by the continuous pressure of increasing population to regard this problem with extreme seriousness, has not hesitated even to legalise abortion. Adequate facilities are provided for it so that the poorest can take advantage of it. In the circumstances of this country, if the population problem is really to be dealt with, this is a step that cannot be long avoided. On humanitarian grounds there would seem to be sufficient justification for the mother of three children in a poor family who finds herself likely to have a fourth, taking steps in time not to have it. Similarly, far wider facilities must be provided for sterilization of men with three children or more and greater propaganda undertaken in *favour of it.*

All these measures would undoubtedly have considerable effect, but the prime need is for the discovery of a cheap oral contraceptive. That it is bound to come, there is no doubt. What is necessary is that it should come as quickly as possible. The setting aside of a large sum, say two crores or more to begin with, for intensive research in this field would be a very worthwhile step. The Government of India should also be prepared to collaborate in assisting scientists abroad who may be working on this problem. A special prize for the discovery within the next two years would serve as an incentive.

The Communists have in the past always held population control to be a capitalist fetish. "Not for us. No," has been their attitude. "We can guarantee work for all the people, and the more the merrier." Recently, however, economic facts have compelled Communist China to break away from this accord. The Communist Chinese Government now acknowledges that its economic difficulties just cannot be solved if population goes on rising at the present rate. It has, therefore, accepted population control as appropriate policy for its people and is pressing ahead with necessary propaganda on a nation-wide scale. Its Minister for Health and national leaders in speech after speech emphasise the importance of population control and declare it to be a patriotic duty. They thus do great violence to Communist theory but recognise reality.

For effective results in this country a very vigorous campaign for birth control needs to be launched and kept up at a high pitch year after year. The aim must be to make every father and mother conscious that if they have more than three children, they are doing the country harm. This cannot be done by just an occasional speech or an address at a council meeting by the Minister for Health. Population control must become a part of the thinking of the Congress and other political parties. Members of the Government of India and State Government must on every possible occasion refer to its importance and advisability in the national interest. The Prime Minister's total influence should be girded towards its explanation and spread. Then only is a solution of the problem likely, provided of course the speaking is supported by proper action.

27-3-1958

TOO MANY CATTLE

One of the principal ways of increasing national wealth is by avoidance of waste. The most prominent source of waste in the Indian economy is the cattle position. One-third of the world's cattle population is to be found in India: 219 million cattle compete with 360 million people for the produce of the land. But for every person there are only 5.8 ounces of milk a day.

To give even a comparatively adequate supply, say 16 ounces a person a day, as against 30 ounces in France and even higher quantities in other countries, the milk production would have to be increased threefold. One-fifth of the cattle are practically useless. Thus the all-over picture shows a tremendous waste of resources.

The indications for the future moreover are towards a worsening rather than an improvement. Population, human and cattle, is rising; soil-erosion is increasing. Pasture lands are being denuded and the upkeep of the fertility of average soil is becoming doubtful. Improved methods, additional fertilizer, remedies of that nature, hardly seem likely to make any deep impression on the cattle problem. The real question is one of the number of cattle considered in conjunction with the ability of the country to support them and to increase their productivity.

The main function of the cow has always been held in India to be the production of bullocks. The supply of milk is incidental, though the demand for it has been increasing. Reporting 26 years ago, the Royal Commission on Agriculture said: "The number of cattle in a district depends upon and is regulated by the demand for bullocks. The worse the conditions for rearing efficient cattle, the greater the numbers kept tend to be. Cows become less fertile and their calves become undersized and do not satisfy the cultivators who, in the attempt to secure useful bullocks, breed more and more cattle. As numbers increase, the pressure on the available supply of food leads to further poorness of cows. As cows become smaller in size and greater in number the rate at which conditions become worse for the breeding of good livestock is accelerated."

This vicious circle remains today, despite the breeding of good bulls, the improvement of dairy strains in a few places and the distribution of good bulls and the rendering useless of bulls not likely to breed sound stock in quite a number of villages. Conditions continue to emphasize the validity of the statement of the Royal Commission that "no outstanding improvement in the way of breeding is possible till cattle can be better fed."

To meet milk needs, India has recourse to another animal, the buffalo, a good milk producer, which gives about double the percentage of butter-fat in its milk as the cow. Thus, there is the cow kept primarily for bullocks and the buffalo for milk, two types of animals for doing that for which one, the cow, should suffice. In the end, while the strain on the cultivator's resources is greatly increased, neither is adequately fed. The order of priority for this purpose is generally the bullock, the buffalo and the cow. Male buffaloes and excess female cattle get what they can and sometimes starve to death.

The country obviously cannot afford the luxury of separate types of animals for milk and for draught. It ought to depend on a dual purpose kind of animal, the males being capable of meeting the needs of agriculture and transport and the females of yielding substantial quantities of milk. This is not practicable so long as there is no possibility of proper feeding. The dynamics of the position may be stated thus: too many cattle with too little feed leads to even more cattle even more poorly fed. Adequate feeding of all the cattle on a very reasonable and by no means extravagant standard would, according to calculations made for at least one State, probably mean putting under fodder and feed-producing crops more than twice the current acreage so cultivated.

Such transformation of the agricultural pattern is not practicable. If attempted, it would have most unfortunate repercussions in other spheres. Accordingly, it may safely be concluded that there are far more cattle to be fed than can adequately be fed even with considerable improvement in yield. From which, and from the other proposition previously stated, the corollary may be drawn: fewer cows, better fed, would produce better and more milk and bullocks.

The Government of India's solution to the problem of useless cattle is to set up gosadans *in waste-lands*, forests and other out of the way places with grazing facilities. Old, useless and infirm cattle are to be segregated there, the male stock being castrated. It was proposed to establish 160 such institutions at a cost of *Rs. 97 lakhs, the inmates in each being* 2,000. The land required would suffice for only an infinitesimal number of the useless cattle—320,000 against an estimated 40 million which need to be dealt with. In fact, of course, the results reached so far have not been at all impressive either as regards the number of gosadans or the number of cattle brought into each. Clearly this is no solution. If it were really to deal with all the useless cattle, the *requirements in money and land would be so large that* they could hardly be met. One State alone would require 1,193 gosadans, with an annual net expenditure of nearly Rs. 120 lakhs and about 43 per cent of the available grazing lands of the State.

A good deal of rethinking cannot be avoided. It must be done dispassionately. The emotional overtones that surcharge this subject must give way to a considera*tion of what is necessary in the interests of man and* cattle alike. Talk of planning to increase the national wealth has little meaning while this enormous avoidable waste continues unchecked.

19-3-1954

FOOD PRICES IN A FREE MARKET

Ministers from several States have been complaining about the recent rise in foodgrain prices. Delhi has been busy denying or attempting to palliate it. Now reports are current of the likelihood of over a hundred fair price shops being opened in Calcutta. There at least the rise in prices would seem to have shaken the equanimity of authority. The harvest this year, it is said, has been good, the third of a series of good harvests. Nature is thus not responsible for any shortage. What then is? Very probably the activities of a free market.

When anyone can buy as much as he wants at any time he likes and sell at any time he likes, the market is free. The price is not relevant to the condition of freedom. It may be high, reasonable or low. Some people may buy today and sell to-morrow; some may buy today and hold for several months before selling. It all depends upon the estimate each buyer makes of the likely movement of prices. If a buyer feels he wiil get a larger profit by selling three months hence, and has the resources to hold, he holds.

This is just ordinary business. There is nothing criminal about it. No law is broken. Nor would most people hold that there was any moral wrong about it. The economic and legislative structure of society permits such acts. For authority, to apply to them the term "hoarding" is merely to use derogatory phrases as a salve for indignation, caused by the lack of foresight which lets itself be caught in such a situation.

Business is business, whether it be in grain or umbrellas. According to its rule, if a man has had the knowledge and skill to buy up in good time so many umbrellas that there are none available at the beginning of the monsoon, he can charge for them the highest price he can get. The profit he makes is the reward for his foresight. So too with grain. And the fact that it is the people's food does not, according to the theory, make him any the more culpable. The real responsibility is that of authority, which, having power, is prepared to leave vulnerable to the play of market forces so complete and *absolute a* necessity as grain. When it does so, it backs its judgment about the trend of the market, and its capacity to deal with the situation should its judgment prove wrong.

If prices rise steeply, both its judgment and its capacity are proved to have been at fault. It has chosen to take the risks of a free market and the burden has fallen upon the people. To say then, "Oh, this is temporary" or "Now that the price has risen so very much, we shall adopt this measure or that," is merely to make excuses. The people having suffered, the failure has occurred. *Having entered upon its policy with open eyes, it cannot* deny responsibility for the consequences if unfavourable, or transfer blame to the shoulders of those who act within the law in line with the nature of that policy. Not after *the horse is stolen must watchful authority lock the* stable door. It is for it to see that the horse is not stolen.

Grain ranks highest in priority among the essential needs of the people of this country. It is the primary wage-good and accounts for the largest percentage of the not-very-varied expenditure of almost all members of the labouring class. Any steep rise in the price of this commodity thus impinges with very special effect on the poorest sections of the people, in other words, on the bulk of the population of the country. The small farmer himself has often to buy foodgrains during several months in the year, since he does not grow enough for himself and his family. Clearly therefore it is one of the most fundamental obligations of Government to see that foodgrains are available to all at reasonable prices.

If Government chooses to let the fulfilment of the obligation be dependent upon the chances of a free market, it must be able to make its will prevail in that market, according to the methods and procedures of that market. *Not as a government, but as a trader, it must be prepared* to act, the nature of its activities being such as to make the market move in the desired direction. When prices go up, it must be prepared to sell, and should circumstances so require, sell on a sufficiently large scale to counteract not only the pressure of private resources but even that of natural shortages.

It cannot sell what it has not and therefore it must continuously have big stocks in hand. If it goes about trying to replenish stocks when conditions arise necessitating large sales, it cannot be successful. In the state of this country minimum ready reserves of about two million tons would seem to be essential. Having the reserves is not enough by itself. Government must also be aware of when, where and how to enter the market. Possessing the stock and the awareness, if fortune favours the enterprise, all may go well. The holding of the stock is no easy matter, since grain is not a durable commodity. Quite apart from the need for sales because of price rises, if the stock is to remain in good condition, Government must be continuously operating on the market, selling and replenishing, the sale being within the country, the replenishment both within and from abroad.

Nor is this all. If in the free market the trend is towards a precipitate price fall, Government must be prepared to buy, for its aim should be not to give the farmer too low prices or too high prices, but to maintain a reasonable level over a period of years. Considering everything then, if it is to be really successful with a free market, it must display a high order of business acumen. The recent price rises do not seem to give any indication of this nor do the low stocks held and the permission to export, countermanded only very recently.

Government can, of course, if it has the courage and determination, insulate grain-prices from the onslaught of market forces. This involves taking over the wholesale grain trade, control, procurement and sale in bulk by State agency. Prices can then be kept steady *at a reasonable level, whatever the circumstances.* If nature proves unkind and such large shortages develop as cannot be made up from imports, the incidence of the suffering can be evened out by rationing and controlled distribution. When there isn't enough, fair shares for all can be government policy. If the harvests are abundant, no restrictions on retail sale would be necessary.

With the free market, a comparatively small dose of deficit financing combined with the talk of deficit financing in future, has sufficed to create the present situation, in which, according to the Government itself, large stocks have been bought up and held. The deficit financing contemplated in the next five years is certainly high, *about thrice the Central Government's annual revenue* budget, and every day almost, there are reports, of further additional expenditure proposals, no doubt desirable on merits, being accepted. These can only add to deficit financing. Is not the time overdue to consider seriously, in the interests of the people, the consequences of a free market in grain in such circumstances?

A little inflation is preferable to stagnation, says authority. When the wholesale index for food articles rises by 86 points in a period of less than ten months, that surely is not little. The time to beware would seem to have come. Let it be remembered that of the causes of economic stagnation none is likely to be more potent than the suffering a free market in grain may well engender.

1-5-1956

FOODGRAINS AND THE SECOND PLAN

The Planning Commission in its printed Second Five-Year Plan estimated an increase by 1960-61 of 10 million tons in foodgrains (cereals and pulses) over the production of 1955-56, 65 million tons. A couple of days before the Report was to be discussed by the National Development Council, one of the members of the Commission, Mr. Neogy, objected strenuously to the Plan, pointing out that since so much of the resources side was uncovered, going ahead with the expenditure proposed could only lead to inflation, likely to be detrimental not only to the Plan's future but also to the country's present. Substantial rise in the price of food, the principal wage good, would hit the poor extremely hard and render the general condition of the people even worse than it was.

The optimism of the resources side, with its 1,200 crores deficit financing, 400 crores uncovered gap and 800 crores expected assistance from abroad to which nobody was committed, was only too evident. The Government, however, felt that whatever the resources, it could not go before the people with a smaller Plan. By God and by Guess, that magnitude must be made to stick. At the same time, Mr. Neogy's point was very relevant and could not be allowed to pass unnoticed. Apart from anything else, Mr. Neogy, having raised it at that very late stage, might make himself extremely awkward if some reassurance was not given.

That gallant knight, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, stepped boldly into the breach. "Inflation," he said in effect, "true, inflation might be serious if production remained as proposed in the Plan. But we shall alter that. The 18 per cent increase in agricultural production which we put down in the Plan, we shall hoick up to 40 per cent. Eighteen per cent is conservative in any case. And I tell you what else we will do to make sure that there is no inflation. We will reduce farm prices by 20 per cent. Then there will be plenty of cheap grain and clearly there cannot be inflation." And so, the National Development Council swallowed the Plan, and Mr. Neogy his objections, neither bothering very much about the discarding of the previous figures that had been settled after years of work or entering into elaborate examination of how the new figures had been reached. *The Deputy Chairman's blithe solution* was reminiscent of nothing so much as the magician's mango-trick. Within 10 minutes from planting the seed, a mango shrub; within 15 minutes, luscious mangoes weighing down its branches!

This incident took place towards the beginning of May. Since then, there has been much cogitation and discussion in the Agricultural Ministry and the Planning Commission. Every attempt has no doubt been made to adhere to the Planning chief's brave words. The latest Press reports however seem to indicate that even the Planning Commission is now satisfied that this cannot be done. The 18 per cent can at best, it feels, become 28 per cent, the increase in the foodgrains estimate being 25 per cent and in commercial crops, 34 per cent. Thus the 65 million tons of foodgrains in 1955-56 which were *to be 75 million tons in 1960-61 according to the Plan* figures, are now to be raised to 80.4 million tons.

The previous increase of 10 million tons was sought to be achieved through extension of areas under irrigation, increased application of fertilizer and manure, use of *improved seed, schemes for land reclamation* and land development and general improvements in agricultural practice. The same kind of measures, it is said, will furnish the additional quantities. The acceleration of seed multiplication schemes and their expansion to cover all national extension blocks in the first three years of the Plan will bring in a further 1.9 million tons. Seven hundred thousand tons extra minor irrigation will provide. Nine hundred thousand tons additional will come from intensifying the distribution of fertilizers and the better use of farm-yard manure, and plant protection and improved agricultural practice will produce the balance. Hope undoubtedly springs eternal in the Planning Commission's breast. The observer can, however, scarcely be blamed if in view of these sudden rises, these changes and choppings on no very clear grounds, he cannot conclude that these hopes are bound to be justified.

The Prime Minister has of late been urging on the basis of not too well substantiated or impartial reports from China, agrarian co-operatives as a means of increasing agricultural supplies. The motive power behind the formation of such co-operatives in China is clearly force. The mailed fist willy-nilly drives the peasant into the co-operative, turning him from an independent farmer into an agricultural labourer. On pain of death or at least long years in correction camps, he "volunteers" to join the co-operative, earning a wage instead of being his own master entitled to the produce he can raise. The wage, generally paid in kind, is kept sufficiently low to enable a surplus from the produce to come into Government hands for being moved to the cities. The system in fact is very akin to the classical collective farm of the Soviet Union, the main difference being that the peasant has not even the small private patch the collective farm employee is allowed. Briefly, regimentation is the essence of such co-operative farming.

Since the Prime Minister clearly sees and proclaims that there is no place for such regimentation in this country, the probability of obtaining supplies of foodgrains in this manner—whether or not it leads to an actual increase in the quantities produced—is extremely little. By *persuasion*, the *peasant* is *not* likely to bring his land into a co-operative farm, unless it is clearly to his advantage. The number of cases in which it would be *sufficiently so to compensate him for the willing loss of* his independence, is in the very nature of things, bound to be extremely limited. Consequently from the point of view of increasing foodgrain supplies, *this device* is scarcely likely to be effective. In considering foodgrain prospects over the next five years, the advisable course undoubtedly would seem to be not to go beyond the original Planning Commission figure of 75 million tons by the end of 1960-61.

Greatly encouraged by one good and two very good seasons towards the end of the last five years, the Government of India did not hesitate to believe that self-sufficiency in foodgrains had been attained. Accordingly, they reduced imports drastically and even went so far as to allow some quantities of grain to be exported. Such short-term thinking brought its own nemesis. Foodgrain prices began to rise and with low stocks in Government hands, kept on rising. Import arrangements were improvised in haste. Fortunately, large stocks being available in other countries, these could be made without much difficulty. Yet the position was at times so precarious that grain had to be rushed directly from the ships to the fair-price distribution shops Government had been compelled to open once again in many centres, supplies having ceased to be available at anything like reasonable prices through the trade.

An agreement with the United States Government under United States Public Law 480 moreover came to Government's rescue with hopes of large future supplies. *For the next 3 years, about 2 million tons are to be* brought in under it and in addition an import programme of about 4½ million tons, both rice and wheat, is contemplated. Recent Press reports put the likely imports for the five years ending 1960-61 at a minimum 8 million tons, taking into account reasonable harvests throughout the quinquennium.

Will supplies rising upto 75 million tons in 1960-61 less the usual 10 per cent for seed together with these imports suffice to give a reasonable standard, maintain at least the 1955-56 standard, for a population estimated to grow on the minimum basis to 41 crores by that year? The standard can of course only be said to prevail if the foodgrains are available at reasonable rates say at the utmost the prices of 1955-56 at all places throughout the year. To the Deputy Chairman's ready offer of bringing down prices by 20 per cent no serious attention need be paid. That was clearly a statement only for the moment and the moment having passed, it would perhaps be considered even unkind in political circles to lay stress upon it. But any substantial rise over the 1955-56 prices would certainly mean inability to keep to the standard and grave hardship to the poorer classes. (It needs to be remembered that as it is about 25 per cent of our people are unable to purchase even the 14 ounces of grain and 3 ounces of pulses considered by nutritional authorities to be essential for health in addition to stated quantities of vegetables, milk products, sugar and fats, which, of course, they never hope to obtain.)

The answer to the question would seem to be that the likelihood is very little if a free market without Government interference is permitted to prevail. With Government control over stocks, and in varying degrees depending on changing circumstances, over distribution, the position could be maintained, provided inflationary pressures in the monetary field were not allowed to get completely out of hand through excessive deficit-financing. Government ought in any case at a time like this, when a surge in prices has already taken place and is being levelled off, perhaps temporarily, because of the expectations of a good Kharif harvest and large imports, to have ready a full regulatory system to be brought into operation at short notice, should that become necessary.

To dislike controls is one thing; to make opposition to them an inflexible religious principle is quite another. All the circumstances would seem to lead to the conclusion that if the latter attitude prevails, the food situation in the next five years—unless of course far larger imports are brought in for which foreign exchange is scarcely likely to be available—may well become quite difficult. As always in such cases, the burden will have to be borne by the poorer sections of the population in whose name and for whose benefit the Plan is stated to be drawn up and operated. The alternative, in conditions of shortage especially, to 'Fair Shares for All' is invariably 'Devil take the hindmost'!

29-12-1956

FOODGRAINS POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Hungry men are angry men, and when hunger is permitted to persist among large bodies of men, anger rises to deeds that tear down the structure of mighty states.

The Foodgrains Enquiry Committee, whose report was presented to the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, if concerned with anything at all, was concerned with the question of hunger and starvation. There is not one indication in the two-hundred and one cyclostyled pages of the document that its authors realised this basic, central fact. The gift of sympathetic imagination seems to have been totally withheld from the group of politicians and economists constituting the Committee. It can only be hoped that this is a temporary aberration brought about by their collective capacity, that individually neither are their minds unmoved by the woes of suffering men nor their hearts unindignant at the failure of responsibility that, if it did not wholly cause, at least aggravated greatly, the suffering.

Of institutional devices the Committee is prolific. It has a touching faith in the creation of further committees. It would have a Board, an Organisation and a Council, all fresh and eager, to say nothing of a Division. The Board would be for Price Stabilisation, the Organisation for Foodgrains Stabilisation, the Council to advise the Board and Government, and the Division to collect information, termed intelligence, for the Board.

If institutions can make up for lack of foodgrains and rising prices, then indeed is this dark winter of our discontents likely to be turned into glorious summer by the many suns recommended by the Committee. The formation of new institutions, unfortunately, like the sanction of new jobs, is very little guarantee that the intended result will follow.

For the Foodgrains Enquiry Committee, the Indian food problem begins really with 1950-51. An occasional glance backwards indicates that it is not altogether unaware that even before that date, accorded by it special relevance, food scarcity and management had some history. But to it that is clearly neither important nor significant. Towards the formative period of food control, 1941 to 1945, the Committee's attitude is completely blank. It firmly turns its face away from any recognition that problems similar to most of those the country is faced with today had arisen in that period and had been examined thoroughly; also that for many of them quite adequate working solutions had been found. To it that experience is as if it had never been.

Why this should be so, it is difficult to tell. Perhaps the Committee's subconscious revolts against admitting what may seem to it the achievements of the Government of the time. If so, let the subconscious be re-assured. As all concerned in those transactions will readily testify, they were at least as much the achievements of the people as of the government. Without the advice and guidance of specially qualified individuals among the people and the general public's co-operation, they could scarcely have been accomplished. The fact remains that the Committee *ignores this period; by doing so, it vitiates its entire report.*

Through page after page of figures and of arguments based on the figures, the Committee emphasises the gravity of the food situation and the little likelihood of its improvement in any short period. It discounts the Planning Commission's brash statements about expected increases of yield. It stresses the necessity for imports and calls for further P.L.480 agreements with the United States, and for arrangements to purchase larger quantities of rice from Burma. In effect it says the country is in a food crisis and to the best of its belief and knowledge, allowing for alleviation in good years, there is little chance of the crisis passing. So impressed is it with the seriousness of the long-term nature of the situation that it sees no effective solution unless the high rate of increase of population is checked and it therefore urges a nation-wide campaign for family planning.

Saying all this, it also says this condition is no emergency. Therefore there is no need for the remedy of proper control i.e., for attempting to mobilise to the fullest extent the country's food resources and for seeing that in times of scarcity the principle of "fair shares for all" is observed. The question arises what would be an emergency. Pat comes the Committee's answer "War or famine or extreme inflationary pressures." The present inflationary condition is obviously in the eye of the Committee minor. Why, there isn't even a famine, in other words, people still manage without dying in the streets as they did in Bengal in 1942. When they do die, it will be an emergency and the Committee will recommend full control. Until then, however clear to it the nature of the situation and the probability of its duration, it would temporise, content us with palliatives, which in fact have the result of rationing by the purse and of enabling the Government to shirk its proper responsibility for seeing that no individual starves because of unavailability of grain at reasonable rates.

Hardly ever can there have been a greater collection of tendentious arguments than in the passage dealing with the difficulties of proper control. That there are some difficulties, none would deny. That they are not insuperable is equally clear. In any case, a presumably independent Committee, specially appointed to advise Government and the people on a matter of this importance, can scarcely hope to be commended if it takes refuge in 'difficulties' from the reality disclosed by its own appreciation of the situation it was called upon to examine.

The pathos of the section entitled Retrospect in the fourth chapter of the Committee's Report is equalled only by its significance. Having examined the food situation and trends in prices since 1950-51, reviewed the food policy of recent years and analysed the causes of the rise in prices, the Committee pauses to consider what clearly is, and what it cannot but find to be, an undiluted record of culpable misjudgment, grievous negligence and most deplorable folly. Like a loving mother sorrowing over the misdeeds of her favourite son, unable to extenuate yet unwilling to condemn, it resorts to a moderation of language calculated to make the reader regard the gravest derelictions of obvious duty as simple, thoughtless escapades. The judgment it delivers is permeated with sympathy. Unfortunately the sympathy would seem to be for the wrong-doers. About the suffering, sinned against public nothing need be said, but the wind must be tempered to the sinning Government.

Hence, such masterpieces of understatement as "the likely implications of economic development have been inadequately assessed;" "economic prescience has also been slow to develop," "the total dismantling of controls appears to have been a hasty step." In the final paragraph, worthy to become a classic in its own right the Committee calmly proceeds to offset "some criticisms we have offered of Government's approach towards the problems of food and price policies as well as some aspects of food administration" by the "unstinted co-operation and frankness of the official witnesses" and the deep anxiety the Committee found in them "to distil from past experience significant conclusions for future action." Well might the Government so favoured proclaim "A Daniel, verily a Daniel come to judgment!"

Not, of course, that the Committee experienced only frankness and co-operation from the Government side. Its approaches to the most important quarter on that side, the Planning Commission, were received with the utmost coldness. When it sought an opportunity to meet the Deputy Chairman in order to obtain elucidation on essential points the door was most unceremoniously banged in its face. "We were informed by him that it was not the practice of the Commission to give evidence before Committees and that any discussion informally held with him could not be quoted." And so, without any compunction presumably, "we did not pursue the enquiry with him," but turned to the Minister for Food and Agriculture for information on his policy.

The implications of this remarkable disclosure are worth considering. The policy of the Food Minister on which the Committee obtained information was rejected by the Planning Commission, and did not become the policy of Government. The Committee was unable to obtain any information on the reasons for this rejection, in fact the grounds for the real policy of Government remained unknown to it. It contentedly accepted this extraordinary position and continued its solemn juggling with figures and institutions, finding consolation perhaps for its rebuffs in that philosophic detachment that teaches that nothing after all matters anyhow. Two questions, however, are bound to arise, can any weight be attached to the recommendations of a Committee that by its conduct confesses so unabashedly its subordination to Government? Can even the credulous regard such a Committee as disinterested and independent?

The Committee assumes that by 1960-61 demand for foodgrains will be 79 million tons while output will be 75 million tons, so that there will be a gap of four million tons. It does not seem to think there is much probability of import of more than two to three million tons, yet it is opposed to proper control. It will not even go so far as to ban a free market in grain. That would be too direct a step for its highly sophisticated personality. In its view, a subtler approach is required. The trade, it will allow "to function on a competitive basis within certain broad limits." At the same time it will "regulate it by suitable countervailing action, over-all as well as selective."

Bereft of verbiage and jargon, the Committee's over-all regulation amounts to reducing greatly the volume of deficit-financing. But development even to the lower extent necessitated by lack of foreign exchange upto the amount originally estimated, involves quite appreciable deficit-financing. The latest estimate by the Finance Minister is 900 crores. So the Committee's remedy would seem to be beside the point. What is needed is some method that in spite of this deficit financing will hold the price of the most important wage and consumer good, foodgrains. The only such method is full, direct control. It has been effective in the past, and properly administered, it can be sufficiently effective in present circumstances to enable the country to get through the difficult years immediately ahead.

The selective action suggested by the Committee is not very different from imposing most of the hardships of control, without giving the citizen the full rights, and the Government the full powers, that come with control. Much of it must lead to uncertainty, bickering, dissatisfaction among the people, and to arbitrariness, indecision and likelihood of partiality on the part of the official. The efficacy of this ever-shifting half-way house is in any case very questionable.

The Committee must know, but oddly enough ignores, some of the most prominent characteristics of the speculative trader in grain. The neatly arranged and intricate structure of its imagination is scarcely likely to offer real resistance to his carefully-planned operations. The Committee ought surely to have realised that it was not want of machinery that had prevented the food situation from being dealt with adequately. No amount of machinery can make up for lack of clear thinking or absence of will, and it is these which have been missing.

Like the Government whose policy and administration it has been examining so sympathetically the Committee has fallen prey to the slogan "What is not popular cannot be done." It, too, seeks and advises the easy path. The thought perhaps has never occurred to it that what must be done, if done well, can become popular, or at least, can inspire respect and attract support sufficiently to permit efficient functioning in the public interest. "A nation which excuses its own failures by the sacred untouchableness of its own habits and behaviour can excuse itself into complete disaster." Grave indeed is the responsibility of those who, given the opportunity, choose not to dissuade but to encourage it in such conduct.

28-11-1957

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DIFFERENT BUT SAME

Mr. Facing-Every-Way is the obvious patron saint of those responsible for the economic resolutions put before the All-India Congress Committee, and "Everything shall be different, Everything shall remain as it is," their equally obvious motto.

They want a socialized economy and a co-operative commonwealth at the same time as they maintain the importance of a private enterprise sector enjoying adequate freedom. They attach equal significance to the growth of large-scale industry and to the keeping up of outmoded uneconomic handicrafts. They are strongly for improved techniques, they are equally strongly against even the least unemployment caused by the use of such techniques. They are opposed to nationalizing existing private industries, but they expect private owners running the industries to consider not their individual or group interests but the national good. They define none of their terms and appear blissfully unaware that "What's good for us, is good for India," represents, quite naturally, the view of the national good taken by all but a very few businessmen.

The framers of the resolutions declare full employment to be one of the three basic objectives of their economic policy, but have not a word to say about the population problem without some solution of which continuing full employment is utterly impracticable. They emphasize the necessity for the production of much greater wealth, but maintain complete reticence about the tremendous waste of resources involved in our present detrimental cattle position. They talk of the desirability of bringing about social and economic justice, but avoid mentioning a single concrete step towards that end.

On the whole then, it may be concluded that the resolutions are not to be taken seriously. Like prayers in ancient, uncomprehended languages, that help to console the devout few while presenting an agreeably edifying spectacle to the many ordinary, these too may satisfy the fervour of the true upholders of the Directive Principles of the Constitution, simultaneously enabling the majority to pay dutiful lip-service.

If, of course, the objects stated in these resolutions as the aims of policy, maximum production of wealth, social and economic justice, in other words, economic development with a truly social content, are really to be brought about the whole approach must be very different. Basic problems must then be faced, not avoided; essential structural changes undertaken, not ignored. The population problem cannot be relegated to committees, nor the cattle problem to gosadans.

As regards economic development itself, it must be recognized that in a backward country, rapid industrialization is the keynote to real advance. Also that economic development in such conditions necessarily involves present sacrifice, often over a long period, and the continuous direction of the results of that sacrifice into investment specially desirable from the development point of view, largely industrialization of the proper type. If the social and equitable content of such development is not considered a matter of any great importance, it can, in certain favourable circumstances, be brought about by the operation of unrestricted private enterprise. The process of development then means a steady increase in concentration of wealth in a small group of capitalists.

If this group is patriotic enough to exercise sufficient restraint on itself to be able to invest a very large proportion of the wealth that comes to it in the right directions for national economic development, the development may happen, provided, of course, the Government is prepared to back up the capitalists in keeping wages low and avoiding any large expenditure on social improvements and other amenities. In brief, the Government must impose sacrifices upon the people to enable the capitalists to make the large sums of money which they must have the wisdom and patriotism to use not for their own ends but for national development.

Such a process, even leaving out of consideration its ethical demerits for the time being, is not practicable in India today. For its successful working, two conditions would have to be fulfilled. The outlook of a very large section of the capitalist class would have to be very different. The Government would have to go much further than at present in concessions to that class and in burdens upon the rest of the community. Thus direct taxation would have to be greatly reduced and a good deal of the current labour legislation would have to be abandoned. The social aims set out in the Constitution would have to be renounced. Quite clearly, neither is it likely that the majority of the capitalists will change, nor that Government will be allowed by the people to change, to that extent. Another way must be found, a way which does not leave the task of economic development in the sphere of industry mainly to private enterprise.

For sacrifice to be acceptable in a democratic society, the first condition is the removal of glaring inequalities; for a plan of economic development to be successful, the first requisite is availability of resources. Obviously, then, that action is imperative which will reduce inequality and make available resources. Except for a comparatively few instances in which the wealth that makes for inequality is due to inheritance or feudal position, the strongholds of inequality today are the high places of the world of business.

In the same places are to be found the bulk of available resources. In a country like ours, personal savings are very limited. The savings from agriculture too do not come to very much. For any large savings, one must turn to industry, banking, insurance, foreign trade and big speculative activity. Important features of these savings are, moreover, the comparatively few to whom they accrue, the complete control these few have over them, and the absence of any reasonable assurance that they will be put to socially beneficial use. Economic development with an equitable content must thus involve the taking of control by the State of the areas of these "saving potentials." Clearly they have to be nationalized so that the resources that accrue from them can, instead of swelling private bank accounts and hoards, swell the central pool, from which must be met the expenditure on properly directed investment.

Two arguments often urged against this course are that the amounts so obtained would not be very large and that the State would fail in the management of these undertakings. About the first, it has to be remembered that the savings to be taken into account are, in regard to many concerns not only those that appear in the public balance-sheets, but those set aside as secret pockets, and those which by devious methods sometimes pass to the principal heads rather than to the concerns. Rationalized management, moreover, of an industry rather than of many units, would in all probability lead to larger savings.

About the second, it is clear that there is nothing inherent in the nature of State ownership to prevent efficient conduct. By the adoption of suitable devices, the flexibility of business can be added to Government management. Everything of course depends upon the men, especially the men in charge of the Government. If they regard the business for which they are responsible as their own or their party's property, and allow nepotism or worse, full sway, State management may well fail. But that need not necessarily be apprehended. Moreover there is generally a term to the corrupt or vicious Minister. The corrupt owner is often there for life.

It would be idle to suggest that there are no difficulties in the course recommended. The difficulties are many and severe, but men of courage, integrity and intelligence will not find them insuperable. In any case, the desired aim, economic development with social and economic justice, large increase of national wealth with large decrease of inequality, is scarcely likely to be achieved in our conditions without it.

Foreign aid by itself offers no solution and the policy of the Government is opposed to large foreign aid. Further direct taxation, it has been stated would so reduce incentives to private enterprise that it would cease to function even at its present level, much less expand. To resort to further indirect taxation or to inflation would be to mulct the poor, while sparing the rich. Though political parties, which have to rely largely on rich men's contributions for their election expenses, may be inclined to shirk the issue, for the serious citizen, there is no escape from it. If the national economic objective is to be attained, it must be tackled forthwith and in earnest.

27-7-1954

AVADI AND THE SOCIALISTIC PATTERN

Those who in the past have felt that the Congress Party did not pay due regard in governing to the economic principles set out in the Constitution must naturally have been gratified by the definite adoption at the recent Avadi meetings of "the socialistic pattern" as the goal of party and governmental policy and action. It is doubtful, however, whether their gratification survived the speeches of the principal supporters of the motion recommending the new proposal. For, after Messrs. Azad and Nehru had spoken, it seemed clear that what was being suggested was not a change in policy but rather a modification in phraseology. "The socialistic pattern" they were proclaiming did not appear very, if indeed at all, different from the current economic pattern. Carefully avoiding the terms "socialist" or "socialism" and making a virtue of the fact that they refused to be tied down to what was termed any "doctrinnaire" belief or mode of action, they took refuge in the word "socialistic," making it, like charity, cover a multitude of things.

Briefly, it would appear on their interpretation that anything they chose to do would be "socialistic." If an industry or unit was taken under State management, that was socialistic. If it was not, that too was socialistic, for the private sector had also to be maintained. A raising or lowering of taxes, direct or indirect, leading to a diminution or increment in private wealth, increase or decrease of government regulation, the establishment of a new industry or unit by government or by a private entrepreneur, all alike seemed to fall within the wide ambit of this model "socialistic pattern." Little wonder that the stock exchanges welcomed this extended description of the term by recording a substantial rise in the price of shares.

The true hallmarks of a socialist society, to which presumably the "socialistic pattern" should try to approximate, are two, social ownership of the major means of production and profit and comparatively egalitarian distribution of the national product. No determined effort to achieve either of these seems to be intended by the framers of the Avadi resolution. They seem to think the first unimportant. They appear prepared to leave most of the major means of production in private hands. Why take over and pay for existing installations, many outdated? Surely it is better for the State to set up new and, so far as possible, different units of the latest design, they argue. They forget that the means of production, even if old-fashioned, are the source and symbols of economic power. A factory with twenty-year-old machinery, housed in a dilapidated building, may not be pleasing to the sight or sense of the technical or manufacturing expert, but if it is all that a country has, it is one of the most important factors in its economy. It produces goods, sells them on favourable terms and makes profits.

Machinery in most parts of the world is old-fashioned and even obsolete in comparison with that, for instance, in the U.S.A. But people do not necessarily scrap it on that account. It continues to function, exerting its influence on society. In private hands, profits from it add to the existing concentrations of economic power, strengthening them and making even larger the present large differences in wealth and in power.

In the hands of the democratic State the corresponding benefits would accrue to the State and be used for the general benefit, very largely in providing the capital needed for further enterprises. The obsolete machinery argument, fallacious as it is, cannot, of course, be persisted in regarding the taking over of large business and wholesale trade, banking, insurance, etc. These are important, not only from the increase of inequality point of view, but also from that of the large resources their handling and profits would make available for the public use and future expansion.

The framers of the resolutions do not seem to have realized how detrimental the large differences in standards are to the general welfare. There can be little doubt that they make the whole structure of society lopsided, creating strains which, despite the expenditure of much time and energy by all sections, can hardly ever be eased. They distort demand, preventing the most beneficial use, from the social point of view, of resources, by no means abundant in Indian conditions. They form one of the prime causes of corruption, the desire to perpetuate them being the occasion for the inclination to bribe and to shuffle, and their existence providing the wherewithal for the large bribe. All in all then, there can be no true socialistic pattern unless at least important sections of the major means of production are socialized. To talk of control at a few strategic points being sufficient in a country in which it is openly admitted that at least as much income-tax is evaded as is collected, is to labour under serious delusions.

There is little ground for hoping that such a policy could be successful. The peculiar ability of the Indian capitalist class to find ways and means of driving a coach and four, to its own great benefit, through any regulations has always to be taken into account. There are, of course, a few honourable exceptions, but it has to be recognized that "it is easier and in the long run more profitable, to abolish a powerful private interest, whose activities are apt to run counter, whatever its professions, to desired goals of national policies than to attempt to regulate it."

Besides leading to a diminution of differences, State ownership of the principal large-scale means of production and business would also enable a set of incomes more in line with the conditions, necessities and goals of this country, to be introduced into a sphere governed in the past almost entirely by the desire to live luxuriously and lay by fortunes. It is true that the number enjoying these very high emoluments may be small and that even substantial reductions in them may not in absolute terms amount to any large figure. Their limited number however, does not prevent them from affecting the minds of the people generally. The standards they set for living and luxury become the standards to which their subordinates and others aspire, with the result that it becomes extremely difficult to obtain at all stages contented working at the rates which the country can afford.

It is often urged that the right way to deal with inequalities is to level up from the bottom rather than level down from the top. When, however, the top is so high as to be hidden beyond the clouds, as often in modern business in India, a good deal of cutting away must be undertaken there for any reasonable relationship to be established between the peak and the foot, however determined the efforts to raise the latter.

In this connexion it is interesting to note the "even in Russia," "even in China" argument. The proposition sometimes seems to be that because in these countries there are large inequalities in income—in Russia they are reliably reported to be greater than in almost all capitalist countries—therefore they need not be objected to in a socialist economy. In actual fact of course, the existence of such wide differences is in itself sufficient demonstration that the U.S.S.R. in spite of its pretensions, is not a socialist country.

The second criterion, comparative egalitarianism, is not fulfilled in it. It offers no example for us or for any other country aiming at real socialism to follow, for both its objective, the maintenance of the Communist Party in power and the extension of its sway throughout the world, and its methods, the rigorous tyranny of a small section who live at a very high standard on the labour of the masses of the people, are not for imitation by those who value the ideal of social justice. The ultimate persuaders to economic progress and power in the U.S.S.R. or China are the concentration camp and the execution squad.

It is well that these things should be remembered at the present time, when more than ever there is no lack of ardent missionaries to persuade us about the merits and beauties of their spiritual fatherlands. Such men are to be found in the strangest places. They are not unknown even in the abodes of research and learning, where perhaps, not sufficiently confident of their own powers, they gather round them Communist experts from many lands. Under the cloak of their own influence in high governmental quarters, they then attempt to insinuate these experts into the innermost processes of governmental working. They pretend that the necessary expertise is not available here and under that pretext busy themselves in introducing Communist methods and minds into our government departments. To economists, officials, and ministers alike may be commended the wise saying of one great both in academics and politics: "Tyranny has no regard to any public interest which does not also serve the tyrant's own advantage."

8-2-1955

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

We are all Socialists now. The Congressmen proclaim they are Socialists; the Communists declare they are Socialists; the Socialists say they are Socialists. Big Business proffers co-operation in bringing about the Socialist society. Small business does not disapprove. In the midst of this rare unanimity, this union of hearts, if not, indeed, meeting of minds, it may appear *needless to ask, what is Socialism? Yet, in the public* interest the question must be put.

Now Socialism has not always a fixed meaning. In it are contained many political forces and ethical trends. Sometimes one, sometimes another, comes to the fore, so that the exact meaning varies from time to time, and on occasion from person to person at the same time. Different generations and different individuals have found in Socialism different things. Yet there are in it some fixed points. The attempt to give justice is of its essence. "*The will to Socialism,*" *says Cole, its* best historian, "is based on a lively sense of wrongs crying for redress." It has to be "a broad, human movement on behalf of the bottom dog."

Freedom and democratic government are also essential elements in it. Where there is no liberty for the individual, where dictators and dictatorial oligarchies, never subject to free elections, rule, there can be no Socialism. The National Socialism of Hitler was as far removed from true Socialism as is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Both misapply the term. Both adopt some of the methods Socialist thought has held desirable, but both turn their backs vigorously on the *principles of individual freedom and true democracy.* In the result, whatever else they may be considered, they cannot be regarded as Socialist. Rightly did the

Socialist International, urged by the Communists to work with them after Kruschev's denigration of Stalin, declare, "Socialism and Communism have nothing in common. The Communists have merely perverted the very idea of Socialism. Where they are in power, they have destroyed every freedom, every right of the workers, every political gain, and every human value which Socialists have won in a struggle lasting several generations. We believe in democracy; they don't. We believe in the rights of man; they mock them."

The material poverty and physical squalor in which large masses of people live is offensive to Socialism. It desires to better the condition of those in need; it stands, in other words, for social welfare. It believes in equality and a classless society. It prefers co-operation to competition, and attempts to strengthen fraternal working. Tired of the inadequacies of the Capitalist system, it lays emphasis on the proper use of natural and human resources for the benefit not of an individual or of a class but of the people as a whole. These are its general aims. Any society aiming to be Socialist has to work out their particular application in its own conditions.

In this country there is no lack of wrongs crying for redress. The large majority of the population can rightly be classed bottom dog. Nearly twenty-five per cent have not the resources to obtain even bare subsistence provision, 14 ounces of grain and 3 ounces of pulses a day. Almost everything is wanting for the masses in every sphere of social welfare. Inequality is rampant, true co-operation scarcely understood. The exploitation of resources benefits more often the individual than the people. What is Socialism in these circumstances?

Socialism, quite clearly, is the adoption within the political framework of all those measures that will bring to the mass of the people food, clothes, housing and education not below a certain minimum standard. This means increased production and better distribution of essentials. It means the provision of employment to enable people to have the means of obtaining the essentials. It means the provision on a much larger scale of teaching and other educational facilities. Socialism means side by side with this, and not as a later priority, the taking of all measures to reduce inequalities, economic and social, without regard to individual, class or interest. These, in our conditions, are the two primary requisites. All effort and expenditure must be examined in the light of these two. Some that does not directly serve them, such as on defence equipment, has necessarily to be permitted, but it must be kept at a minimum.

Increase of wealth and reduction of inequalities involve in Indian circumstances, public ownership of the principal instruments of production and finance, factories, banks, etc. In some countries, where poverty has already been defeated through the enlightened modern use of accumulated capital, nationalisation, it may be felt, need not be continued. Here, neither is anything like sufficient capital available nor anything like sufficient enlightenment present in the majority of those who hold such capital as is accumulated.

The immediate purpose of Socialism being the raising of the standard of living by providing to the people certain essentials, and not, it must be emphasised, trumpery geegaws, combined with the removal of inequality, what is the likelihood of the declared Socialists of today fulfilling it? The Congress contains individuals sympathetic to the purpose and anxious to make it succeed. But by and large, there is no very genuine enthusiasm. The rank and file is occupied with savouring its position as the new ruling class. The leadership, or at least an important section of it, has got involved with the holders of economic power and social position in such an intimate way that both its thinking and its attitudes would seem to be fundamentally affected. Its manner of life approaches their's, its friends are often to be found among them, it enjoys their hospitality with great relish. Above all, it relies upon them for replenishing the party chest. Nor is the reliance any longer merely on contributions from individuals. Companies in their corporate capacity contribute. It would be vain then to expect from the Congress a serious, determined drive to fulfil the Socialist purpose. The Finance Minister may come forward with a pin-prick or two like the recent tax-proposals designed to produce a few crores a year, but gradualism is likely to be so very much the policy under the Congress that its assumption of the Socialist label must be considered mainly a helpful convenience and disguise.

The Communists, by the nature of their doctrine do not, as has been seen above, merit consideration in this discussion. There remain the Socialists, a stricken party, without united or effective leadership. Nor can there be certainty about the strength of their conviction. Many of them have perhaps been so impressed with the difficulties of Socialism abroad, especially of nationalisation, that they may be loath to push ahead. Government as conducted by the Congress may seem to them to aim about as far as can be reached. Yet there is more understanding material in this party than in any other. Had it convinced and trusted leadership, there would be a fair chance, irrespective of election results, of true Socialism being continuously before the public, so that the Government might be compelled to depart from its general attitude of nonchalant indifference.

20-12-1956

POLICY IN PRACTICE

Hardly ever can there have been a stranger statement by a responsible Minister of Government than Mr. Krishnamachari's *reported explanation during the recent* budget debate. Said he, "I knew that the man (to whom I gave a licence) was going to do black marketing. I knew taxes were not being paid. *I knew huge profits* were being made because we gave quantitative protection of a blanket nature. I knew we were bleeding the consumer in this country white *by* allowing *these enterprises* to charge what the market would bear. I and my Government did it in the interests of the country. We did not do it in the interests of private enterprise." And he also said, "I must tell my friend from Mehsana that we have served this country well. In doing so we have served the poor man ill because we have served the vested interests extraordinarily well. Why? Because we wanted the wealth of the country to grow."

The ordinary citizen has good cause to be grateful to the heat of debate. Only that, acting on an impulsive temperament, cut to the quick by the ungrateful assaults of those whom it believed it had continuously benefited, could have brought forth this startling revelation. Now, at last, the facts are out. They show themselves naked, shameless, in complete contradiction to all that the people have been told the Government stood for.

What exactly does Mr. Krishnamachari tell us? The Government wanted the country to be wealthier. Therefore, they gave licences to men whom they knew would black market, *they turned a blind eye towards* tax-evaders, they permitted the charging of extortionate prices by concerns whose products they protected from competition. They *did all this, not through error nor through negligence*, but with full knowledge. There was no lack of awareness that the consumer was, in Mr. Krishnamachari's expressive phrase, being bled white, nor that, to use his own words again, in order to serve the vested interests extraordinarily well, the poor man was being ground down.

And yet, Mr. Krishnamachari has the temerity to assure us that by such acts he and his colleagues in the Government have served the country well. Clearly his conception of what constitutes the country needs extensive modification. Who are more properly the country, the mass of consumers and the poor or the black marketeers, the tax-evaders, the makers of extortionate profits and the vested interests in industry and commerce? What kind of an economic philosophy is this that finds the country's welfare in serving extraordinarily well the strong, and mostly unworthy, few at the cost of the weak many? Perhaps this is the new Socialism which the Government is always so loath to define, the end-result of that flexible, non-doctrinaire outlook, that broad, uncommitted vision, which it proudly declares its ideal!

A country's wealth cannot be increased substantially without increasing industrial production. Industry, today, is almost entirely in private hands. Perhaps in Mr. Krishnamachari's view, those in charge of industry would not increase production without the kinds of inducements he details. Accordingly, to add to wealth he had to offer them. If indeed, this is the reasoning, what a comment upon the nature and state of private industry! Condemnation could scarcely go further, nor after this, could any case against nationalisation be sustained. The argument in detail would seem to run thus: To get industrial expansion and increased industrial production, the rich, especially the managing rich, must be allowed and encouraged to get richer, for only if their savings, corporate and private, increase, will they feel desirous of investing. For their savings to increase, they must get *better returns* by *ways* legitimate and illegitimate. Since the objective is more production and consequently, greater national wealth, no special notice need be taken of the means. True, the increase in the riches of this class will probably be, in one way or another, at the expense of the bulk of the people. But, that cannot be helped. How else can capital be accumulated in the hands of the classes accustomed to use it for industrialisation? So, let Government policy ensure a free hand and no finickiness.

On the same day on which Mr. Krishnamachari was making this statement, Mr. Nehru was telling an audience of businessmen that the idea of free enterprise in its original sense really pertained to the 19th century and could certainly not be fitted into the India of today. Those who attempted so to fit it were very mistaken.

What Mr. Nehru says is correct, but surely even the unadulterated free enterprise theory, with its implications of a free *market, open competition and the state only* standing by to serve as night-watchman and very occasional umpire, is infinitely better than the actual practice of Mr. Nehru's Government, as disclosed by the Finance Minister of that Government, according to which the night-watchman not unoften takes on the role of helpmeet to the burglar, invites his attention to tempting joints, *lets him escape after his coups, and distracts the victim's* vigilance by singing seductive songs. That thereafter, he has the hardihood to tell the victim that he is, and has been, serving him most faithfully and well, is a measure both of his audacity and of his view of his victim's credulity.

Mr. Krishnamachari, of course promises to reform. *After the elections, it seems, he has come back a different* man. No longer will he yearn only over the capitalist.

He is now determined, he says, to persuade his colleagues to "take direct financial responsibility for the well-being of the lowest income-brackets to the extent this Government has resources." We can all applaud this determination and wish his efforts success. It should, of course, be clear to him that if this admirable sentiment means anything at all, it means at least providing the minimum quantity of cereals and pulses, 14 and 3 ounces respectively per day, at very reasonable prices to every individual. During the last year the prices of these commodities have, as he knows, risen very appreciably so that large numbers of the poor have suffered greatly, Government having been unable to fulfil even its most elementary duty of providing food at reasonable rates for all the people.

When refuge is sought in the limitations of resources, it might be remembered that the avoidance of waste, nay, even the abandonment of what may appear reasonable expenditure, if it is not absolutely indispensable on the strictest standard, is also as good as saving. An important test any man entrusted with public funds and desirous of giving the best possible deal to the poorest classes could apply with advantage to all proposals for expenditure is, "If the funds were the property of a truly prudent person, would he spend them on the purpose stated when he had a large family of semi-starving children and relatives to feed?" Men in such position have also to remember that an ounce of example is worth several pounds of official statements and that the conspicuous consumption and ostentatious living and behaviour of ministers at the centre and in the states can scarcely carry conviction when they plead limitation of public resources and call upon the people for austerity and sacrifice.

28-3-1957

KAUTILYA AND TODARMAL

The tall, spare man, seated on a marble bench overlooking a green, flower-studded lawn, muttered to himself questioningly, "Overtaxed? Hm! Overtaxed?" His countenance was stern, the rugged bone formation of his face projecting itself on the consciousness almost as if there were no flesh on it. Not until the glint in his grey-green eyes was noted could one decide that here was truly a man, not just an ascetic anchorite beyond the claims of feeling and compassion.

Clad completely in white, except for the thin, black rhinoceros belt around the middle, from which dangled on the left side a small oblong case containing reed-pen, stone ink-pot and sand-cellar, and on the right, a well-tempered, sharply-pointed dagger in a simple leather scabbard, he looked most impressive. Thought seemed his natural climate, yet clearly action would not find him wanting.

Hearing a sound behind him, he looked round into the room adjoining the terrace. A surprisingly pleasing note came into his deep voice as he said, "Raja Sahib, if it is convenient, perhaps you will not mind honouring me for a minute." Prompt came the reply, "I am always at your service, Guruji, as you well know," and there stepped out on the terrace a stately personage, the splendour of whose presence was enhanced by a double string of large pearls around the neck of his brocade cloak, while a spearhead of emerald in a diamond-encrusted shaft, worn on the front of his turban of many folds, shed a strangely lambent glow on broad, furrowed forehead, penetrating eyes and decisive face. By his side hung a plain curved sword and his left hand rested naturally on its workmanlike hilt as he walked forward to the bench.

Bowing low, he asked in the firm, resonant tone of one accustomed to make himself heard above the din of battle, "Your orders, O Sun of Wisdom."

"Todarmalji," said the deep voice, "the secrets of Government finance come as naturally to you as those of the winning of victories. You are indeed the soldier-statesman. You also know well the land which we have left. Sit down beside me and favour me with your opinion.

When first I came to this realm from whose bourne no traveller returns, always was I anxious to learn about the state of the land I had left. As you know, the earth can hide none of its quarters from us. Whatever area we wish to observe, we can. So tragic, however, became the plight of that country, so utter and complete the ruin of all the work my great master, Chandragupta, and I had wrought, that my eyes turned away and for periods that men call on earth centuries, I cared not to look again. Sometimes, new arrivals from there would seek me out and tell me about events. Generally, however, so dolorous were their tales that I would beseech them to leave me unharrowed. Once, passing the Hall of Music, I heard a bard called Tansen singing of the glorious Nine Jewels. That was the first time I heard your name. Later, since we both find pleasure in the company of experts in economics and government, we met and talked. But always I avoided reference to our unfortunate home on earth.

"Only very recently, about three years ago as men count time, I learned that in our country the people were their own masters again. I confess I was moved and from that time onwards I have tried to keep in touch. In the conduct of affairs, I saw much foolishness. Often those in charge seemed to have no knowledge at all of nations or even of men. But I saw also what pleased me greatly, endeavour in economic matters and a desire to build up the nation's prosperity.

"Now this cannot be done without money. You know my old saying 'The Treasury is the foundation of all.' And where is the money to come from, except the people? But of late there is quite a clamour, especially from the big merchants and manufacturers. The country they say is overtaxed. Little more can be obtained from it. And so schemes and projects must be put back, the plan, as they call it, extended. Tell me, then, most reasonable of minds, what do you think, you who are accustomed to weigh arguments better than the finest of jeweller's balances can the diamonds of Golconda?"

Todarmal: "The Emperor I served said to me once, when he thought I had been too severe in some temporary settlements—you may have noticed him, Excellency, by that nobility of countenance that marks him out even among the many nobly-featured here—'A man can only give what he has, and of what he has, the good government *will take only a fair share. The question* remains, what is a fair share. That, Raja, depends on the circumstances. When we are not pressed, as at *present, the Treasury being sufficient for all services* and no new foe appearing in the field, a sixth of the produce should suffice. When we are pressed, a fourth *or even a third may be fair.*'

"Not having your capacity for detachment, Serenity, I could not refrain from watching the affairs of our former country. Especially during the last ten years, my interest has been constant and sustained. Not that I have not wished I could turn my eyes away, for at times my veins have swollen with rage and I bit my lip in helpless vexation. The sceptre seemed to have fallen into the hands of children and they treated it often as children would, like a toy. Such churning of the ocean to produce a pearlless shell I have seldom seen. Now, however, the point is, they undoubtedly are hard-pressed, and so the people must pay more than they used to. The fair share naturally goes up. Men being men, equally naturally, complain. We have both had experience of that, Sagest of Counsellors, have we not?"

Kautilya: "Your words remind me of a time when I thought it almost certain that I would be dismissed in disgrace from my Ministership and would have to wander forth, begging my bread in exile. I had secret news that the enemy from the North-West had gathered large forces together and was planning a quick attack. Our own troops were, except for a few, down in the South, conquering new areas and consolidating what had been won. An attack then meant ruin. At least a two months' postponement must be obtained.

"Of the enemy's allies, one was lukewarm. I had reports from his household that a sufficiency of costly jewels would cause him to withdraw his army. If that happened, there would probably be no attack. At least, it would be delayed. The gems in the Treasury did not come to even half what was wanted. Time was running short. Chandragupta was on progress at five days' distance. I sent the revenue-collectors to the houses of all the great merchants, rich money-lenders and opulent mining contractors. 'Your jewels,' they said, 'by the Chief Minister's orders.'

"Some handed them over, some resisted and were overcome, some tried to evade and were made to disgorge. All, however, were bitterly angry. They sent off a fast-moving deputation to His Majesty. By forced marches he returned to the capital. I, having dispatched the jewels, was anxiously waiting for news of the defection that would make us safe for the time being, when at the second hour after midnight I was summoned to the

Palace. The ransacked had already told their story and I saw whispering in the King's ear a courtier who had no cause to love me. The King turned on me frowning and demanded my explanation.

"If I could speak in private," I said, making obeisance.

"No," came the answer. "You have dishonoured and robbed the greatest of my subjects. Say what you have to in their presence."

"My hour had come, I felt. To speak in front of them would spoil all. Bowing low, I said, 'I cannot', then drew myself up and looked him full in the face. Never have I met a man whom Chandragupta could not see through. His eyes caught mine. They held them transfixed. They searched my heart. At last, his gaze left my face. He turned to the complainants. 'Go,' he said. 'Bear taxation like strong bulls, rich men. There is good reason for this, though I know it not at present. I shall see you again later, if necessary.'

"But these reminiscences take me away from our subject. The complaint now is that already too much is being taken by the Government from the nation. Have your keen eyes discerned this?"

Todarmal: "Your ever-fresh mind will not have forgotten that a short while ago when the newly-arrived Western expert on the incomes and taxes of various countries, Chief of Statisticians they called him, was speaking in the Hall of Calculation, he said out of every 100 rupees of the national income of India, only eight went in taxes. He thought for the kind of development that was needed, the eight ought to be raised soon to at least 15. So far from being overtaxed, in his view then the country is undertaxed.

"I, too, taking various sections into consideration, come to the same conclusion. Where special irrigation facilities have been provided at the public cost to private land, rarely is the proper due made recoverable. Among the manufacturing and trading classes, evasion of taxes is very common. You were pleased to say regarding the collection of jewels you ordered that those who evaded were made to disgorge. That happens very rarely indeed in modern India. Those who evade generally escape and are enabled with the wealth they have thus hidden to buy up other people's properties and become richer and more influential.

"There is much less fear of the law than in your time, Just Minister, or even than in mine. We heard cases promptly and decided them promptly. We made our subordinates do the same. Not often did more than a few days pass between offence and decision. But now, if a man is rich, months, nay years, may pass before the case against him can even be properly heard. The statesman who was discussing the inter-connection of Greek and Indian philosophy with you some time ago, once said on earth, 'Justice delayed is Justice denied.' There is a great deal of such denial in India today.

"And the tenderness of the Government towards the tax-evaders. He might well be a favourite son-in-law. Not only will they not put him in prison, but they will not even let his name and the amount of his evasions be made public. And some of the most prominent of such anti-social men they constantly consult and honour with their company. Some years ago I saw a phrase that has stuck in my memory, 'the black marketing princes of tax-evasion.' Truly, that is an appropriate description for, like princes, such men enjoy rich estates, wield great power and exercise much influence, and like princes, they are received with ample respect by the chiefs of society.

"It just does not seem to be understood that ordinary people do not object to paying taxes so long as they think they *are treated fairly in relation to other* tax-payers. No, Most Considerate, do not fear this is an overtaxed country. It is rather a country in which few people feel a wrong done to another as if it were a wrong done to themselves, and hardly any regard a wrong done to the State as a wrong at all. Even Ministers and high officials are not quite sure of their responsibility to, and identity with, the State. That alone can explain many of the things they do, tolerate and encourage."

Kautilya: "It is as I suspected. I am indeed very grateful to your perspicacity for clearing my doubts. With the new industrial civilisation, I was not quite sure about my analysis. I diagnosed the situation thus: weak and inexperienced leadership, without sufficient force of character and regard for integrity to inspire the ordinary people to continuous effort and some sacrifice; mass apathy; and a desire on the part of an educated section to do great things, so long as these do not affect them adversely. I concluded that in such conditions there could not be overtaxation. The total psychology *of the environment*, to use some recently-heard jargon, would be opposed to it. All that can be expected, I suppose, are gestures like the Wealth and Expenditure taxes they are talking of now."

Todarmal: "They now take moderate Estate duties when a man dies, though there is of course a good deal of manipulation beforehand. With us, on a man's death, his entire property reverted to the Emperor. His Majesty would make some provision for dependants, if necessary, but the bulk of the corpus always remained for use in the interests of the State."

Kautilya: "Perhaps that might be too severe, though even John Stuart Mill, whom I like talking to because of the sheer intellectual force that animates his conversation, tells me he recommended an absolute upper limit, and not a very high one, on the amount any person should be allowed to inherit. And he says that his reputation was that of being entirely opposed to state interference in economic matters. Anyhow, you and I are at one in that there is neither overtaxation nor much likelihood of a great deal more than the present amounts being realised, at least for some years to come.

"But the need for large sums is evident, even if, as they say, they extend or put back some of their contemplated schemes. Where are these to come from? Perhaps gifts can be obtained or loans borrowed. Gold and silver the people of India would be willing to share with a stranger if he were poorer, but just as willing would they be to accept his bounty if he had greater wealth. So I said from experience. And now that there are so many richer countries, probably that is the solution."

Todarmal: "Would that it were so, Excellency! Perhaps it could have been, but in view of the Government's complete disregard of the feelings of the most likely lenders, that cannot be counted upon. You yourself said they knew not nations. Also, for a long time, their view about this was not in conformity with yours. The receipt of money as loans or gifts from abroad, it was felt, was something very unworthy and to be discouraged. Now there is a change of attitude, but as the magnanimous Raleigh, with whom I was talking about tobacco and the art of historical composition, quoted,

'He who will not when he may,
When he will, he shall have nay.' "

Kautilya: "Then, they will have to tax the people severely, to practise strict economy, above all to acquire character.[*] If, in addition, they learn to recognise facts and to give no comfort to the vicious, help, too, may come *their way. You and I, Sagacious and Valiant Governor,* were greatly immersed in the affairs of the world, but always at the back of our minds was the consciousness that 'The river of God's grace never dries up. It is never frozen. No tiger nears its brink.' A nation may drink of it just as freely as a person."

18-8-1957

5

UTTERANCES EXAMINED

Blunt disagreement is very distasteful to the Indian temperament. Politeness demands that the fact of disagreement should not be allowed to obtrude itself too strongly on the public consciousness and that its expression should be cloaked and guarded so that it almost appears as agreement.

This trait is evident in several parts of the proceedings of the recent meeting of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Delhi. The dispassionate observer is compelled to conclude that there is hardly anything in common between the economic thinking of the Prime Minister, who addressed the gathering at length, and that of the Federation who went on to discuss and pass a large number of resolutions. Yet each side strove hard to reassure the other, almost conveying the impression that there was in reality no difference. They seemed to forget that, in such circumstances, the greater the effort to conceal, the more clearly apparent the cleavage.

The Prime Minister talked with fervour about the "socialistic pattern of society." He was not using the words, he said, in "any rigid way, but in a definite and clear way." The business men present no doubt appreciated the difference. All that he wanted was what was good from the people's point of view. If they looked at it like that, then all this public and private sector dispute became meaningless. Both the sectors would gradually merge in each other. Everyone had to have food, clothing, housing, sanitation, medical attention, employment, work. If this was agreed to, the need for theoretical arguments disappeared, the area of disagreement lessened.

Agriculture, small-scale and cottage industries were obviously in the private sector. He did not necessarily rule out the private sector in regard to big industries, but of course the public sector could not confine itself to waterworks and parks. Such thinking would be completely out of date in the nuclear age. Planning was essential. He was very much in favour of the public sector growing and advancing rapidly, but it must not be thought that he was in the slightest degree opposed to the advancement of the private sector. Business men must adopt the ideal of the socialistic pattern of society and work for its fulfilment. "But you have to change your mental attitudes. It is good they have changed and are changing, and no doubt will change."

The speech of the President of the Federation was equally conciliatory. He too talked about the modern age of total war and total peace and the folly of demarcation between public and private sectors in it. Encouragement to everybody to press forward was all he asked for. He did not altogether approve of pervasive control over economic and commercial activities. He was somewhat concerned about the prevailing prejudice against large-scale industry and about its eruption, on occasion, into denunciations and threats. Pathetically he urged: "If we want a cow to give milk, it is a proper feed and not a big stick that is called for." And he made a declaration of faith: "We do not seek political power. Our passion is not wealth. We want to carry on our business to the best of our ability."

When, however, the Federation got down to cases and began to consider the policies and actions of the

Government, the show of agreement could no longer be kept up. It was obvious that it disapproved strongly of almost every important decision the Government had taken or was proposing to take. Direct taxation, too high and a disincentive to effort; State control over the Imperial Bank, certainly not, open a separate bank if you want to; amendment of Section 31-A, completely wrong and unjustified; abolition of managing agencies, of course not, pause and reconsider; and so forth. The cry then was all for freedom and facilities, it amounted to saying: "Just give us these and we shall do the job. In addition trust us, establish a closer liaison with us, take us into your confidence. We are for the welfare of the people, but not for control by the State over the means of production and distribution and over the economic life of the country."

Quite clearly then, the Federation is not even thinking, much less preparing to act, in terms of the "socialistic pattern of life" the Prime Minister contemplates. Its mental climate is what it always was, that of normal commerce, the belief that its duty is to make a profit, reasonable or handsome, depending on circumstances, and that in the process of the making of that profit, it would also produce goods and render services that were useful to the people. And it naturally wants all hindrances, all interferences, to the making of that profit, to be swept away.

"What is good for General Motors," said Charlie Wilson of General Motors, Defence Secretary in the present U.S. Cabinet, "is good for the U.S.A." The Federation would hardly disagree. In fact it would probably go further and say: "What is good for members of the Federation is the only good for India." Between this and the establishment of a minimum level for all citizens, the movement towards egalitarianism, and the accordance of priority to social ends over profits, which are some of the principal elements of a socialist pattern, a great gulf yawns.

No good is done by denying this or attempting to cover it up. On the contrary, the public interest would be greatly benefited by frank acknowledgment of these differences. The Government ought to recognize that they exist; it ought to take them into account in its consideration of policies and formulation of action. The Federation too, in its own interests, ought to set out its point of view frankly and try and win support for it by adducing arguments favourable to itself. Public opinion is not an inconsiderable force and, if the Federation can convince it by active reasoning, it certainly ought not to refrain because of any feeling of consideration for, or tenderness towards, the Government. The present position, where all parties hesitate to speak out, except in general and often vague terms, does no good to anybody and is positively unhealthy. The full airing of grievances and views is a prime requisite of democratic functioning.

The statement of the Federation President that "we do not seek political power," appears, it must be confessed, somewhat formal. Big business may not seek direct political power, but, except in a very few instances, it is never averse, and is generally anxious, to exercise political influence. And this is understandable, for in conditions in which business is so greatly affected by Governmental decisions as in the world of today, some business men may well consider it their duty to their business to be in a position of sufficient importance to be able to give the necessary turn to Government decisions. This may involve, among other things, large contributions to political party chests at election-times and on other occasions, such as huge party gatherings. It may involve keeping in close touch with, and helping in various ways, party officials and members of the party hierarchy.

So, too, the second part of the declaration that "our passion is not wealth" comes somewhat oddly from a gathering, many of whose members are extremely rich. Did they, by any chance, get together all their wealth in a series of absent-minded interludes, as the British are reputed to have won their empire in India? No one becomes really rich unless he is deeply interested in acquiring wealth. There may be, of course, a very few exceptions to this general rule, but the Federation meeting would certainly not contain many of them. In Indian conditions, where business is still largely under family, and not managerial control, and where the speculative element plays so prominent a part, the accumulation of large wealth is obviously the prime motive of business.

Few appeals are more truly ironical than the constant "Trust us, rely upon us, have confidence in us," that is the refrain of such gatherings. If, instead of being the good natured and considerate individual that he is, the Prime Minister had been a clear-sighted cynic he might have said: "Certainly, gentlemen, certainly. Trust you, with the greatest of pleasure. Rely upon you, implicitly. But just tell me first, how many are in trouble with the Income-tax authorities? Would you say that establishes a sound basis for confidence?"

20-3-1955

FREE ENTERPRISE BEHAVIOUR

To the Chairman of a manufacturing concern somewhere in India, a visitor whom he had known for many years said, "Well, I suppose you will be paying a very handsome dividend this year." "What!" exclaimed the Chairman. "Well," said the visitor, "your raw material costs have been very reasonable, your labour costs haven't risen, and there has been a great demand for your product so that you must have got good prices. Surely all that should mean a high dividend." "Yes" said the Chairman, "yes, it would," and with a very blank expression on his face, added "but then I don't propose to starve; you will probably find that my raw material costs are not so low, after all, nor my selling prices so high."

The visitor nodded in comprehension. This obviously was another of those cases, where a secret commission in cash to the management on all purchases and all sales prevented profits from being high, the shareholders' bank balances from swelling or the taxes from rising. Just so much cash seeping gently into the Chairman's pocket, to be put into secret vaults in the form of cash. Sometimes, of course, it might be converted into gold, bought quietly for cash. Sometimes just as cash, it might serve extremely useful purposes ranging from increasing economic power by under-the-counter, "benami" purchases to pleasing friendly souls in one way or another, the present of a car or a new set of furniture.

In a certain concern, some units produced the quantities that were shown in the accounts as sold; while the production of some units was left out. They were said to have been sealed, but in reality they were also working. The cost of the raw material for them went on to the cost of the raw material for the other units. Their production was sold, without appearing in the accounts, to confidential parties, a slightly lower rate being received in cash. In the result, a higher cost for raw material and lower return from sales, consequently lower profits for the concern, lower taxes for the State and at the same time handsome gains with no taxes to pay for those in charge.

Shortly after a manufacturing concern, well-known for the quality of its product, changed hands, the Manager was sent for by the new proprietor. Said the proprietor, "I see you are using this material. I propose to replace it by that produced by another of my own companies. This will mean a considerable saving." Said the Manager, gasping "But, Sir, that will reduce very greatly the durability of our product. Our customers will not be satisfied." "Oh", said the proprietor "Don't be so old-fashioned. They will like what we give them. In any case, they won't know for quite a time."

The purchaser of a new business was attempting to persuade a bank official to grant him a loan. Said the official, "I really don't know that I can, I think the price you paid for that concern is most extravagant." Said the purchaser, "Please don't worry about that. I am arranging to so manipulate that the shares will rise substantially above the present price. By the time I have finished unloading, I shall have made up at least twice what might be considered the excess in the price. I will be able to tip you off, too, so that if you enter into any transactions on this, your profit will be certain."

A retired official was being given lunch in the dining room of a large firm by another retired official, now employed nominally to manage, but really to serve as a front, by the owners of the concern. Two young men of about 18 and 20, scions of the owning family, came in. The host introduced his guest, adding that he had held high rank in the Income-tax Department. "Income-tax! Ha, Ha," said one of the young men. "You don't catch us paying income-tax." "No", said the other, deeply serious in contrast to his brother's frivolity, "We consider it our religion to do everything possible to avoid paying!"

These comparatively uncomplicated instances are but a very few of the many that could be recounted to illustrate the spirit animating a great deal of big business in this country. And yet, there are people who are astonished at the low reputation business has and indignant at what they call the false slurs on Free Enterprise. They talk about "the popular tendency to decry the entire Free Enterprise for the misdeeds of a Few."

The actual position is, of course, completely different. The misdeeds are of the Many; only the Few refrain from them. No accurate statistical computation can be made, but it would not perhaps be wrong to say that by and large the Many comprise not less than 70 per cent of business concerns. Accordingly the general criticism against business is not only justified, but in the circumstances extremely moderate.

That the Few, the abstainers from malpractices should feel deeply distressed at the situation is understandable. Sympathy is due to them, but they can scarcely expect it to be extended for any length of time if they make themselves champions of the Many and in an attempt to defend Free Enterprise generally, deny the misdeeds and palliate their extent.

The Forum of Free Enterprise, a body devoted to the propagation of the Free Enterprise ideal, has recently put out an excellent code of behaviour for businessmen. *It does not, however, give any information as to whether* it proposes to enforce this code or how it proposes to enforce it. In the first instance, has the Committee of the Forum made certain that it consists only of the Few? Has it secondly made certain that all the members of the Forum belong only to the Few? Assuming this is so, what are these Few going to do to get the Many to act in accordance with the Code? Do they propose to set up an organisation to investigate the Many? Will they warn them in particular instances? Will they cease to have dealings with them if they do not fall in line? Will they attempt to throw them out of the commercial bodies of which they are members? Or failing to do that, will they form separate bodies on their own?

Briefly, will they do anything beyond issuing as an advertisement in the newspapers the Code, and then or simultaneously, lecturing here, there and elsewhere about the merits of Free Enterprise to people who know that the behaviour of the bulk of the Free Enterprise in this country can in no sense be considered as even approaching a moderately satisfactory standard, rather that it is daily deteriorating?

From the point of view of the general public, this degraded position of business is further complicated by the attitude of the party in power and especially of its government. Neither of these have set their faces firmly against even businessmen notorious for malpractices. On the contrary, many such are among their most confidential advisers. It is also to them that they mainly turn for the funds with which to fill their party chests and fight elections. Once, the anti-social ill-deeds of business miscreants moved the Prime Minister so much that he wished to hang them all on lamp-posts. Today even the fount of honours is polluted. The Congress continues, of course, to fulminate against capitalists and capitalism. It says it is all for a socialist state. Yet between its organising section and the important among the many there are close ties based on mutual interest. *Its wrath is reserved for the capitalists, often* from the Few, who, conscious of their good behaviour, wish sometimes to be independent.

7-2-1957

THE MENACE OF PLUTOCRACY

Expecting a guest who likes cheese, I bought some two days ago. I paid Rs. 4-8 a lb. for it. Before the budget, i.e., the 15th of May, it was Rs. 4 a lb. Prior to the import cuts, a month or so earlier, *it was Rs. 3-12.* The cost of a pound of cheese then has risen by 12 annas, 20 per cent, in about the last three months. Now, who has got this 20 per cent? Government? No. All it did was to say that it would allow no further cheese to be imported into the country. It did not put any excise duty on the sale of cheese already here. The retailer? No. I buy my groceries from a small store. I have known the owner for several years and have found him reasonable in his dealings. He assures me he hasn't raised his margin. His new orders have come in at a higher price. He now has to pay Rs. 4-2 a lb. himself.

The wholesalers? Yes. It is they, these gentlemen *holding the stocks of cheese, the directors of some limited* liability company engaged in the import trade, or some subsidiary of this company, open or unacknowledged, who are quietly taking away this 20 per cent. Is there any reason why they should make this extra gain? None at all. They already had a sufficient margin and were doing handsomely when the retail price was Rs. 3-12. That import was stopped did not in any way put up the price for them. The cost of the stock in hand and the orders placed before the import ban did not go up on that account. The budget put no burden on cheese. Why then did they push up the price? They were following the first principle of a very large proportion of big business in India, "Rook the customer as much as you can, whenever you can."

Now cheese is for many middle-class people an out-of-the-way thing, and it may seem irrelevant to cite the higher price of it. But cheese is an example, and a good one because of the twofold increase. The price of a large number of articles of common use has gone up since the budget, so much so that more than one small-income housewife asserts that her living bill will rise by about the same figure as the double increase in cheese, 20 per cent. In some articles and in some instances, the retailer too is taking his share, but by and large, it is the big man following the law of most of his kind. The Government may take columns in newspapers and advertise expensively that the increased cost of the goods it has taxed ought to be only some insignificant amount, but what the public pays depends on what business, especially big business, decides.

Says the Government there is more than enough grain in the country, but hoarding and speculation cause shortages and put up the prices. Who are the hoarders and speculators? Tenants? Small owner-cultivators? No, not these. They are big men with money, men to whom the commodity matters but little, men who are prepared to buy up with money anything that they consider they can by holding, in the conditions of a free market, sell more expensively later, forward-looking men, according to the commendatory language of big business, men always prepared to take a view and act on it. No wonder, the hapless Finance Minister,—hapless because though aware of the right method of dealing with this situation, unable to apply his knowledge,—has to content himself with moaning "When I was framing the budget, the index figure (of food prices) was round about 420. Now it is 438, a rise of 18 points or four and a half per cent."

The spirit that animates the bulk of big business in this country has been referred to on more than one occasion. Numerous instances have been mentioned and it has been pointed out how "the general criticism against business is not only justified but in the circumstances extremely moderate." To the apologists for big business in the bulk this has clearly been anathema. Their indignation is increased by the fact that they can offer no rebuttal. But they do not lack ingenuity. Many are the clever minds among them. Many the clever pens. And so, a new argument is trotted out now. The appeal is to fear, the intention to make the blood creep.

Disentangled from the many glosses with which its validity is sought to be enhanced and its weaknesses concealed, the essence of the argument may be set out thus: "Whatever these men may be, whatever the deserts in all justice, if you do not leave them undisturbed in the possession and control of their property and power, you are playing the Communist game. They alone stand between you and Communism. Take away the control over the economic machine they wield, and all is over. Nay, even refuse to treat them with cordiality, turn a cold shoulder towards them, mention their misdeeds in the tone they deserve, and your feet are set on the Communist path."

What does this mean? It means equating democracy with the keeping in power and ease of a small, largely-corrupt and law-evading plutocracy. It means regarding this section as the only true champion of democracy. It means distrust of all other groups, professional workers, educationists, smaller industrialists, cottage industry workers, small traders, medium and small agriculturists. Among these are to be found many men who work for no one but themselves. Their number runs into millions as against the few hundreds of the plutocrats. It means assuming that they are not really interested in attempting to maintain civil liberties, the rule of law, freedom of expression, liberal institutions, free elections. If these continue unimpaired, clearly the country cannot be a Communist state. Even the apologists may be prepared to admit this if stated as a separate proposition.

But of course their anxiety is to consider nothing separately, everything in line with their thesis. And so, their view would seem to be that the continuance of this section of the plutocracy in economic power is the sole means of assuring freedom for the people. No reason is given for this great trust. Have the deeds it has performed as a class or the acts of its individual members shown a high degree of self-reliance and standing for the right in its dealing with authority? Are there to be found in its ranks some commercial Hampdens, strongly opposing the dictates of Ministers, ready to sacrifice themselves and their all in the cause of justice? On the contrary they have proved most pliant to authority's every beck and nod. The old Moghul formula when given an order, "on my head and eyes" might well have been their watchword. They have sought and obtained special favours. And these are to be our champions of democracy! Dispensing with them is going to assist the Communists!

The apologists might just as well have argued that had Chiang Kai-shek got rid of his corrupt relatives and taken over their properties, he would have strengthened the Communists. *In fact, of course, one of* the principal reasons for his being in exile in Formosa is his failure to take such action. Few things indeed would strengthen democratic government more in this country than the belief among the common people that the government was entirely uninfluenced and uninfluensible by the less desirable and major section of big business and that it was handling it as it should be handled, removing its capacity for mischief by taking over its concerns. Even the honest section of big business would rejoice. What is really galling to it often is that while it suffers from all the laws and taxes imposed, because it respects the one and pays the other, the dishonest section evades and flourishes, increasing its power. Few of the weaknesses of government are more harmful than its inability to repair this deplorable state of affairs. In remedying that and not in the course advocated by the apologists lies at least part of the proper answer to the Communists.

6-6-1957

6

ANTI-ENGLISH

We are so busy planning revolutions that we have no time for reform, says a witty Frenchman about his own country. In the matter of languages, some state governments in India are so busy planning the destruction of English that they give no time to thinking out a proper language policy.

They completely forget that a mature Government recognises that in bringing in the new, every care must be taken not to destroy the good in the old. They also seem to forget that their people do not live in water-tight islands, but are members of a larger whole, India, and that therefore what they do must have some consonance with what the Governments of their fellow-states and even more, of India, are doing.

At the present time, English is the language of educated India. It is the medium of instruction of almost all the Universities. It is the language in which official work is carried on in the Secretariat of the Government of India, in the Supreme Court, and in most State Secretariats and High Courts. Almost all joint-stock companies conduct their affairs in English. It is the language of Government, of business, of education, of law.

The Constitution provides that while Hindi shall be the official language of the Union, for 15 years from its commencement i.e., upto 26th November 1964, "the English language shall continue to be used for all official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before such commencement." If there is to be any modification in this provision, it must be on the report of a 30-member Committee of both Houses of Parliament, which is to examine the recommendations of special Commissions to be appointed by the President at the end of five years and at the end of ten years after the commencement of the Constitution. The framers of the Constitution are careful to warn the Commissions that in making their recommendations, due regard must be paid to the "industrial, cultural and scientific advancement of India" and to the "interests of persons belonging to the non-Hindi speaking areas in regard to the public services." The Constitution lays down that even after 15 years, Parliament can for any specific purposes provide that the English language be used. It is also clear that as between the State and the Union, the language of communication should be English so long as it is used for official purposes in the Union. So, too, between State and State, unless by agreement both decide to correspond in Hindi.

The framers of the Constitution are clearly wise. They have realised that so vital a matter is not a thing to be rushed. A proper grasp of language is essential for national advancement, and modification of the instrument of communication, without full preparation, is bound to lead to deterioration in every sphere. A fifteen-year period for so important a change is not in their view too long. As the provision for a double examination shows, they wished to proceed with abundant caution, and were not prepared to have all standards lowered in order to satisfy hurrying advocates of a clamant pseudo-nationalism.

Their conception of the Hindi that is to be the official language of the Union also merits special attention. The Hindi they think of is still to be properly developed. Since it is to serve as "a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India" they wish it to be enriched by assimilating forms, styles and expressions from other Indian languages and to have its vocabulary enhanced by drawing upon Sanskrit and upon other languages.

Now, one would have thought that, at the very least, States like Bombay, before they proceeded to render ineffective the learning of English in the schools under their control or aided by them, would have awaited the results of the first examination by a Commission, scheduled to take place in November 1954. Instead, while English continues as the medium of instruction at the Universities, while it remains the language of examination for the all-India Public Service and Defence Force tests, while it is used throughout in all official dealings of the Unions, while the State Secretariat itself cannot function except in English and the work of all business in this great commercial and industrial province is done in English, the State Government in its wisdom has decreed that the study of English shall not be begun except at such a late stage as to render it extremely difficult for the student to acquire even sufficient knowledge of it to enable him to profit by the lectures, necessarily in English, he will have to attend at his College.

In other words, by its own action, the State makes extremely difficult the proper acquisition of knowledge by the young from among whom are to come the leaders of the future. It puts them at a disadvantage in competition with the young from other States both as regards Public Service and Defence examinations, legal and scientific appointments, and posts in business.

Nay, it goes even further. A school may, after school-hours provide instruction in painting, in dancing, in gymnastics, in fretwork, in anything which parents are prepared to have taught to their children; but in the State of Bombay, a school cannot, even after school-hours, provide instruction in English until the late stage at which English is to be officially begun is reached. Neither parents nor teachers must attempt to correct the educational errors of the State. The result is to weigh the scales in favour of the rich, who can always pay for private tuition in English for their children at home. The handicap the poor always have is further increased as a result of arbitrary decisions of this nature.

Nor would this seem to have exhausted the limit of the State Government's indiscretion, for it now lays down that no school in which the medium of instruction is English shall admit hereafter any children whose mother-tongue is not English. In such schools, children from many communities and with many mother-tongues used to learn together. Now, they must be segregated in schools where all the students speak their own language. There is, of course, great pressure on all existing schools, yet by reason of this order, some schools are not to make use of their full capacity and some children will probably have to go without any schooling at all or some schools be extremely overcrowded. The schools that are not to admit students whose mother-tongue is not English will also be affected financially very badly and may have to close down, so that there is danger to some of the best educational institutions in the country. All in all, grave injury is likely to be caused to students, parents, institutions, the State, and not least of all, the country.

Is there any reason behind this Alice in Wonderland behaviour? Is English in fact so evil a thing, must prejudice against it be carried so far, that somehow or other, whatever the damage, its teaching and learning must be seriously injured? It is not necessary to go into the merits of English or to dilate on the great services it has rendered to the cause of Indian freedom and unity. It is enough to urge that such behaviour does not help the cause either of Hindi or of the regional languages. You cannot by deposing English establish them in its place. They have to learn to take it, and the process of learning is neither quick nor easy, more especially when those who should be making them fit to take its place are doing very little about it.

Since it is the intention to make Hindi the language of India for all purposes, a great deal more should have been done in the past four years. The standard Hindi acceptable to all areas should have been evolved and should have received the approval of all concerned. As many books, important from the point of view of students, as possible, should have been translated into it. The controversies in different states about the place of Hindi and the local languages should have been discussed and authoritatively settled.

After this had been done, the next five years could have been devoted to increasing the scope of Hindi, giving it a larger place in governmental examinations, the High Courts, the Defence Forces, etc., so as to get people in all parts of the country thoroughly accustomed to it and prepared to move forward of their own accord at the end of the fifteenth year into its use as the true national language. Meanwhile, English should have been continued to be taught with care and interest, so that at least the educational achievement of the young men who leave our colleges in the next ten years should not deteriorate. If we are not to advance, let us not fall behind even further than at present. Education is a State subject, but the Union is deeply concerned with the results of State action in this sphere. The least that can be expected from it is proper co-ordination and sufficient influence to prevent each state from breaking away as it wills to the detriment of the general public interest.

7-1-1954

REGIONAL LANGUAGES AND HINDI

Maulana Azad is perfectly right. There is still in Congress circles a great deal of that narrowness which, together with the intransigence of the Muslim League, he held responsible for the coming into being of Pakistan. How else can one explain the refusal to recognize Urdu as a regional language in the very area which has seen its greatest development!

Only those prepared to close their minds entirely to history can argue that Urdu is not a truly Indian language. However much some part of its ancestry, being foreign, may be disliked, the facts remain that it originated in India, has one of the finest literatures of any Indian language, is the mother-tongue of quite a large number of Indians following the two principal religions, and has a very special place in the life and culture of the country in general and of Uttar Pradesh in particular. The partisan minds that refuse to recognize this are indeed kin to those others that equate patriotism with particular kinds of clothes, nourishment or forms of speech. In their view, no greater sin exists than non-conformity with their practice in these matters.

The language problem of India, complex indeed with its fourteen major divisions, is greatly bedevilled by the continuous interference of this type of mind. After mature deliberation, the makers of the Constitution gave clear guidance on this subject. They would hasten slowly in order that they might arrive at their goal in good condition. But people of this kind would rush wildly though the result might be that they would not reach the goal at all.

Their enthusiasms overlook all practical considerations. Whatever the damage, they would like to reduce the fifteen years the Constitution laid down for making Hindi the official language. Ignoring preparation and against all intelligent advice, they in many States insist on making it forthwith the medium of instruction for higher education. The students are bound to suffer, say experienced educationists. A matter of little significance, say Ministers in power, so long as we have pushed forward Hindi. What should be the subject matter of reasonable argument and understanding arrangement is thus degraded into dogma.

Accepting the fact that in due course English must give place to Hindi as the language of official work at the Centre, many questions still remain, especially in the realm of the respective positions of Hindi and the regional languages in that large part of the country where Hindi is not the regional language. Should the place now occupied there in the educational, administrative and other spheres by English be taken over by Hindi, or must Hindi give way to the regional languages for those purposes? In other words, is Hindi to acquire that dominance over the intellectual and cultural life of India that English has now, or is it to be a medium of communication between the Union and State Governments and between a comparatively few well-educated men in different parts of the country? Is it to be the language of India or a mere *lingua franca*? There is considerable difference of opinion on this point. Unless it is resolved, no uniform language policy can be worked out. Not that that is any hindrance to individual States. The Government of Bombay, for instance, has already taken the bit between its teeth and is proposing to implement almost immediately its preference for Hindi over the regional languages as the main medium of instruction.

The answer to the question depends really upon the conception held of the functioning of a democratic society. For the working of a real democracy, the language of administration of a State must be at all stages the language of the bulk of the people of the State. Even the Central authority in a federation, when its language is different from that of the people of a State, has to use the State language if it wishes to deal with the mass of the people of the State. *Since, moreover, there cannot be* a truly democratic society without social mobility, the language used in the educational institutions of the State must obviously be the language of the bulk of the people. Advances in all branches of knowledge must be made known through it. If it is used only for the inferior stages of administration or education, it will be apt to lose vitality. *Accordingly, it would seem to be clear that the* principal regional languages and not Hindi must be the languages that will have to take the place of English in their regions, Hindi being, except where it is also the regional language, merely the language of communication between the State and Central Governments and among educated people from different parts of the country.

The other solution would mean retarding the development of State languages and consequently of the mass of the people speaking them. It would also mean creating a privileged class throughout the country of knowers of Hindi, who would feel it quite unnecessary to have any real knowledge of the language, literature or culture of the particular region in which they lived.

It may well be argued that the replacement of English by the regional languages rather than by Hindi is a factor making for disunity. There is some substance in this point but not enough to outweigh the disadvantages from the choice of Hindi mentioned above. If it is recognized in fact that the Hindi that is to be the official language at the Centre is not the Hindi of the Hindi-speaking regions but has, according to *the* Constitution, to be so developed as to serve as a "medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India . . . by assimilating the forms, styles, expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India," that in itself should tend to counter the movement towards disunity, for this new Hindi will be a medium of communication much closer to all the Indian languages than any existing medium.

What, finally, is to be the fate of English? It will, if we are wise, always have a very special place in the higher education of all regions, for, even apart from its utility as the principal international language of modern times, in its very texture are contained concepts of the highest value for a liberal democracy. So long as it remains the language of official work at the Centre, no question of giving it up should arise in the universities. Even later it would be advantageous to continue it side by side with the regional languages, so that as large a number of students as are so desirous can benefit from its most exceptional gifts.

1-4-1954

SLOW BUT SURE

Do Messrs. Nehru and Desai really think they are helping to establish harmony by criticising those who differ from them over the language issue in the manner in which they do? Is their aim peaceful arrangement or do they wish to add one more difficult problem to the many they have created by the short-sightedness and intransigence of their behaviour?

Quite a number of the best minds in South India are opposed to the making of Hindi the official language of

India in place of English. In a public meeting they put forward their united views. They have the support of a similar strong movement in Bengal. Is the best way of handling such a situation to describe the conveners as old and out of date and to term the language of their demands "hysteria," as Mr. Nehru did, or to comment upon their requests as the "follies of old age" in Mr. Morarj Desai's words?

A government the leaders of which use this kind of language in dealing with the requests of most respectable people, many their own former colleagues who still belong officially to their own party, can scarcely escape being addressed in the language of strife and fighting which according to Mr. Morarji, pains him, but "is not peculiar to the South and is happening everywhere in the country." When grace and conciliation depart from the tone of Government itself, how can they expect it to be present in that of those who address them?

Rightly does Mr. Rajagopalachari retort that it is no answer to reasonable arguments to call them "hysteria" or to make a vague statement "we are getting old and others are remaining young for all time." In reply to the charge of Mr. Desai, he was even more devastating. "We are guilty of being old, we are guilty of being perhaps, wise and, if you may call it, daring to advise those in authority. It is time that the authorities in a democracy begin to hear people of all sorts, young or old."

That is the real nub of the matter, the willingness of the authorities to listen to other people's views without being outraged and pouring forth contumely upon them. If the government fails to follow this elementary principle even at this late stage, it will double all its difficulties and make impossible the carrying out even of beneficial measures.

The Report of the Languages Commission was a document which did little credit to its members. Its bad and ambiguous drafting was perhaps designed to make it mean all things to all men. Even then, there were two very clear minutes of dissent from Bengal and the South. The delay in the publication of the report for over a year after its presentation would seem to show that the Government itself was by no means enthusiastic about it, and felt a great deal of hesitation in revealing its contents to the people. The events that have taken place since the publication, the expression of strong feeling against its main recommendations in the South and in Bengal, the view of the sub-committee of the University Grants Commission, all indicate that this is not a subject to be rushed through. They should serve as a clear warning to the Parliamentary Commission that has been set up, and that, from the reports that have appeared in the newspapers, seems to be inclined to attach little weight to the difference of views on this matter.

In reaching a decision on such a controversial issue, a wise government would take into account several facts. It would remember that the provision in the Constitution about making Hindi the official language was carried only by one vote in the Congress Party meeting; in other words that the feeling against doing this, even in the first flush of great nationalist enthusiasm, was very strong. It would recollect that Hindi is still an extremely undeveloped language and that most of the standard classics in essential subjects have yet to be translated into it. It would recognise that the provision in the Constitution about forming the new Hindi by enriching it from all the languages of the Union has remained a dead letter. It would note that the Hindi of its creation is certainly not the language of the common people of Hindustan, that in fact they find almost as much difficulty in understanding it as do the speakers of other languages, so that the contention that their Hindi is the language of about half the people is by no means correct. It would *give due weight to the considered views* of the Educationists' Committee on the question of the maintenance of English.

Accordingly it would conclude that of all matters this would probably be one of the worst to insist on hurriedly. The antagonism that would be aroused by such a course would be deep and long lasting. It would strengthen the belief of those who hold that the Government of India has neither understanding nor appreciation of the views and problems of the areas below the Vindhyas. It would develop the fissiparous tendency which the Government of India is constantly deploring and loosen the unity which it says it is most anxious to maintain.

Festina lente should be the motto of the Government of India in this matter. Let them hasten slowly and they *will reach their goal faster than they otherwise would.* Nor will the reaching of it occasion any conflict.

The first need is to introduce Hindi from the very beginning side by side with the regional language in all schools throughout the country. Thus *the non-Hindi speaking child will grow up with an* automatic grasp of the language. (English can as usual come in from the 4th standard, so that there need be no falling off in the knowledge of this world medium of scientific, commercial and political communication.) If this is done, within 20 years, two generations of Indians will have acquired a really sound knowledge of Hindi. It will in fact have become their language. This period too will offer sufficient time for the development of Hindi into a full grown language capable of expressing all ideas and nuances of thought. Large numbers of worth while books will also have been translated into Hindi while a real Hindi literature, covering many branches of learning, will have come into being.

That will be the proper time to press the question of the change over of the official language. These conditions having been fulfilled, there can be little doubt that the proposal will be readily accepted. For by then from use will have sprung love. The people of the South and the East are fully as patriotic as the people of the North or the West, and when they find the Indian language understood, used and appreciated by all the people of the country, they are scarcely likely to insist on its not being adopted for the work of government.

It is difficult to see what serious disadvantage is caused by the postponement involved, or what great national purpose is achieved by now forcing Hindi as the official language down the throats of unwilling people. Wisdom in this case dictates the cautious approach. It will be well for the country if instead of using condemnatory and pejorative language, the leaders of the Government of India realise this basic fact.

3-1-1958

7

CASTE COMPLEXES

A recent issue of the *New Yorker* contains a telling cartoon. Two Khadi-clad gentlemen are seated on a bench. One, reading a paper in the title of which the word Bombay appears, says to the other "More controversy in Alabama! You'd think those people were being asked to send their children to school with untouchables."

The reference is to the protest by some sections of the White population against the entry of a Negro lady into a White college in Alabama, which caused so great a furore recently. From the drawing it is clear that the artist is not familiar with India; the costumes are not quite right and the scene is rather too Moghul for the Bombay area, but the point is apt enough.

Indians, never loath to condemn others for colour prejudice and racism, themselves suffer not a little from the same diseases. The prestige attached to fairness of complexion, especially in women, even by the educated, who it might be expected would know better, is an example, though a minor one. The major example is, of course, the prevalence of untouchability, even after it has been declared unlawful.

No wonder the Prime Minister feels impelled from time to time to raise his voice powerfully against an orthodoxy which would continue and justify the traditional practice that does such great harm and injustice to a large group of Indian citizens. Just as the Southern Whites in the United States must give up their fight to keep the

Negro down, so must the more orthodox sections of our population cease to struggle against the full acceptance of the untouchable.

For a nation to flourish, the social equality of all citizens must be admitted, not merely in declarations but in practice, at least as freely as their political equality. That it is not so in some portions of the United States is a blot upon the liberal tradition of that country. That it is not so in some parts of India indicates how far, despite our many claims to being truly civilised, we are from that stage.

To the credit of the governments in both countries it must be said that their efforts have continuously been in the right direction. One saddening fact is that it is not among the wholly ignorant or comparatively untaught that this prejudice is to be found most prominently. It is seen at its height amongst some of the better trained. Such men are best described by the proverb "Extremely literate, totally uneducated."

The Prime Minister rightly condemns not only this class but also the other which allows its conduct to its fellow-citizens to be governed by its belief in the superiority of its own religion. All not sharing the faith of such men should in their view be treated as second-class citizens. Religion to them is primarily a political fact; only secondarily does its spiritual aspect, the private relationship between individual and divinity that is embodied in it, and is its true justification, glimmer for them. If they have influence and power, they render even a fully democratic state, theocratic.

Political defects necessarily have to be dealt with on the political plane. Continuous vigilance by governments is necessary to see that classes of citizens considered inferior because of these reasons are not in reality disadvantaged. This is both a tedious and an unpopular task. Yet if the solidarity of a democratic country is to be maintained and its fundamental values upheld, it remains one of the most important duties of government, and should be the special care of those highest in power.

One great obstacle to getting compliance in this matter is that some even at the higher levels, Ministers, legislators and officials, may share these prejudices and allow them to influence their official attitude, taking no notice of grievances and perhaps even being responsible for them. The tendency of groups in power to look after their own is one of the commonest features of human behaviour. From the need for the justification of this often arises the necessity to denigrate other groups.

Good government demands a conscious urge to rise above this tendency, to consider in all public matters the interest of those outside the group at least as much as of those inside it. If the group outside is at a particular disadvantage because of historical or political reasons, even special measures in its favour may become necessary. These ought not to arouse resentment but rather to be regarded as undoing a long-standing injustice.

Superiority complexes about caste and religion in the cultured and political action based upon such complexes, are indications of the thin veneer that separates the civilised man of today from his primaeval beast-like ancestor. The right frame of mind in these matters, especially for Indians, is intellectual and emotional acknowledgment of equality, leading to action appropriate to that frame of mind.

12-4-1956

DR. AMBEDKAR AND BUDDHISM

Little attention has been paid by the public, press or government to one of the most significant events of recent years. The conversion of Dr. Ambedkar and 200,000 of his followers to Buddhism may well mark the beginning of an epoch. Its consequences are bound to be felt throughout Indian society. Whether in the end they are favourable or not will depend largely on the wisdom and far-sightedness of that society. Deep study and prolonged cogitation preceded Dr. Ambedkar's severance of ties with the Hindu fold. His emotional attachment to it was undoubtedly strong and his decision seems to have caused him great pain. Only hopelessness could have driven him to it, the certainty that as Hinduism had no honourable place in it for himself and his kind, it was better for them to leave it. Yet such was the attraction of the past that the departure could not be further than to Buddhism, the first of the Protestant movements of Hinduism.

To be categorical about whether or not Dr. Ambedkar is right in despairing of reasonable amelioration while continuing in the Hindu fold, is difficult. That he acted in no hurry is apparent. His decision was based on sufficient experience. Nine years have passed since Independence. He was himself in close touch with the leading men in the government for about six of them, so that he must have had ample opportunity to judge of what could and could not be expected at the highest levels. It would be idle to pretend that these nine years have seen a real diminution of the feeling of caste, and of the practical application of the spirit of casteism. The Constitution enshrines equality among citizens, but Hindu society as a whole practises inequality. Says the Backward Classes Commission in its Report released this year: "It was evident that this sense of caste and discrimination based on social inequality is eating into the vitals of the nation." And again, "Perhaps in theory no other religion elevated the concept of the quality of man to such a high philosophic level as the Vedic theory that the individual soul is the manifestation of the One Eternal Soul. Yet in practical life no other religion in the world has been more guilty of maintaining invidious distinctions between man and man, even when belonging to the same religious persuasion. According to its fundamental concept Hinduism bestowed a high place upon the soul as distinguished from the physical body. Yet in actual practice the physical purity of the body became an obsession until it unfortunately became the very foundation of the Hindu religious structure. The inevitable result of this discrepancy between theory and practice was that while the mind of the Hindu was absolutely free, his hands were heavily tied. He could think as he liked, but almost every act of his daily life was prescribed by authority to an extent unknown to any other religion."

Of the grievances of the Backward Classes then, there can be no doubt. The question remains "Is the remedy advised by Dr. Ambedkar likely to be effective?" According to one view: "Clearly not, unless the untouchable becoming a Buddhist migrates from the place where he has been known as an untouchable. A mere change in his religion is not likely so to impress the higher castes that they will alter their treatment of him. To them basically he will be what he was, however he chooses to call himself." According to another view, "No, not so. The untouchable in many villages has to draw water from a separate well, but the Muslim draws water from the same well as the higher castes. Belonging no longer to the Hindu fold, the untouchable may well cease to be the lowest element in it. He will stand right outside it as a Buddhist. With the status of an outsider, he will also have its rights."

In any case, the conversion gives the untouchable a platform to argue from. Whether the argument can be effectively sustained depends very much upon the quality of leadership, both overall and local. Dr. Ambedkar will have to follow up this first step by continuing, vigorous, assertion and countrywide guidance, if those who have adopted the new dignity are to be enabled to sustain it in the face of much determined opposition. The essential element of the basic Buddhist teaching, with its emphasis on each individual, may of course be itself of great aid in this. Those deeply impressed with it are likely to attain an inward strength that can well withstand the attempt to keep them down. Any man full of the belief that he must be a "lamp unto himself, relying upon himself only and not upon any external help," cannot but be a formidable opponent to the forces of social injustice that wish him to continue in a state he knows well to be degraded. Opposed by such metal, the upholders of custom may well give way. If they have any true realisation of their best interests, they certainly will.

Dr. Ambedkar has chosen the moral remedy. For this the country has cause to be grateful to him. Hardly anywhere in India is the lot of the people as hard and oppressed as is that of his followers. Many of them are economically below the verge of subsistence, and psychologically, at that of despair. It would have been easy to have drawn them to the fashionable material remedy of these times. Dry and seasoned timber, they would have blazed furiously had he chosen to apply to them the Communist torch. His scholarship, understanding and ethical standards have made him refrain from that course.

He clearly deserves, not misunderstanding and misinterpretation, but co-operation and assistance from the public and Government alike. Obstacles to the onward march of his people to equality are truly hindrances to the welfare of the State.

25-10-1956

THE FAILURE OF PROHIBITION

Any Congress dignitary to any other Congress dignitary thus:

> "*It is not in Prohibition to command success,*
> *But we'll do better, Sempronius, we'll proclaim it.*"

And so Prohibition is proclaimed a success, a great success, an overwhelming success, whatever the facts. To Congressmen, the success of Prohibition is purely a *matter of faith.* Prohibition ought to succeed. Therefore, it has succeeded. Anyone who says it has not must at least be wrong. Very probably, he is also impious and unworthy. The Greeks had a saying, "to love and to be wise is given only to the gods." The Congress has been in love with Prohibition for many years now and not even its best friends will claim that Congressmen, however high their status and dignified their attitude, have yet risen to the loftiness of mind appropriate to the gods. Consequently, where they love, they are not wise. Hence, their assertions as to the success of Prohibition, their intense and oft-expressed desire to spread it throughout the country, whether it is effective or not.

In reality, of course, Prohibition is a failure. Any impartial observer in cities like Bombay or Madras, or in rural areas where Prohibition is in force, especially along the coast, can ascertain this fact in no time. Drink, he finds, is not only available, but easily available. Nor is the price much higher than that fixed for legal sale. Country liquor in rural areas may occasionally be even cheaper. A great deal of home brewing goes on. All those who want to drink know where to get it and find no great difficulty in getting it. Sale is organised on an extensive basis; so is smuggling. Occasional arrests make little difference. If the business is closed in one place, it opens in another. Quite often, even the venue remains the same and the work goes on after an interruption of a day or two.

Drinking has not been curbed, nor have the number of drinkers. Many acquainted with actual conditions hold that both have increased. They state that, before Prohibition, in order to get a drink, a man in the rural area had to go at least to the small bazaar town. He would drink there and come back home, rarely bringing liquor with him. Now, however, since the brewing is at home, not only does he drink a lot more, but the women and children also participate in the joyous ceremony. Thus, in quite a number of families, where, except for the man, drink was unknown, it has now become the common introduction to a social occasion. In the cities, too, there is no lack of drink. Bombay, Poona, Madras, Kurnool—no one who wants either foreign liquor or country liquor in any of these or smaller towns is likely to be disappointed.

How well-known this is can be gauged from the following instance. A senior executive, who held a permit for drink in the city he lived in, a Prohibition area, went by air to a city in another State, also a Prohibition area. On his landing, a messenger handed over to him an envelope from a very high authority, who knew him well. The envelope contained a temporary permit *to cover the stay of the visitor in the city. He was told* that this had been issued to him without his asking, because the high authority, knowing he would not be content without a drink and would get it illicitly, did *not wish him to* break the law! Yet, the same high authority would presumably not think twice before delivering a public lecture, or indeed several public lectures, on the success of Prohibition.

Not many months ago, having to speak to a group of young men, I arrived at the appointed place a little before time. I found the rostrum occupied by a great exponent of Prohibition, who had been addressing the same group and was now answering questions. Asked one of the young men, *"Do you know, Sir, that many* of the officers who have to enforce Prohibition go home at the end of the day and have a drink? If you really mean business about Prohibition, ought you not to stop *that?" Said the liberal*-hearted propagandist: "It is very difficult to stop such things. In any case, he among you that hath never sinned, let him throw the first stone! Why point out the faults of your fellows? In time, let us hope, nobody will drink. If our aspirations are high and noble, is not that enough?"

The latest Report on the subject, that of the Prohibition Enquiry Committee appointed by the Planning Commission, was not for the purpose of assessing the merits of the policy. It was for the purpose of reviewing the administration and making recommendations for a programme of Prohibition on a national basis. It adopted, in the words of a member who signed the *Report subject to a dissenting note "an attitude selective* and propagandist rather than objective. Its examination of the evidence tendered before it seems to have been neither methodical nor critical. The Report quoted with approval the family budgets of addicts and non-addicts, prepared by the Bombay School of Economics and Sociology in 1950, and of workers, before and after Prohibition in the Salem District of Madras Province, prepared by Professor P. J. Thomas. Surprisingly enough, the Bombay addict spent no money on liquor even as the non-addict did not; the Salem workers did not spend any money on liquor before Prohibition, as they did not after Prohibition! It was also presumed that there was no illicit consumption after Prohibition and hence no expenditure. The significance of the comparisons is somewhat lost if the addict, like the non-addict, spent no money on liquor, and if the worker spent no money on liquor before as after Prohibition! ....Reference was made to the more recent investigation made by the Economic Adviser to the Madras Government, regarding family budgets before and after Prohibition. The pre-Prohibition budgets in Madras city, for instance, contained an item of expenditure on liquor, but not the post-Prohibition budgets. The Report, however, mentioned that there was some illicit consumption. Unless it were free, illicit consumption would have involved some expenditure. The explanation that the consumers of illicit liquor did not admit it and reveal the expense is no warrant for the inference that no expenditure was involved at all!" Conclusions based on reasoning of the nature alluded to can scarcely carry conviction to those not already convinced.

From the minute of dissent and the main Report, it becomes clear that at least the Government of one of the States that have introduced Prohibition, Madras, is very doubtful about suggesting extension of its own system, and that another, which had introduced Prohibition in some areas, Madhya Pradesh, has reversed it in at least one area and introduced individual rationing under the label of "Prohibition with permits." "The fact that these two Congress Governments, deeply committed to and with experience of Prohibition, advocated some kind of individual rationing, instead of orthodox Prohibition, discounts optimism regarding the effectiveness of Prohibition."

Says the Prohibition Enquiry Committee, "A strong public opinion against the use of drinks and drugs is a condition precedent for the success of Prohibition." What follows immediately after this sound sentiment makes it clear that there *exists* no strong public opinion. For the rest of the paragraph considers highly artificial ways and means of attempting to create such public opinion. The correctness of this judgment is also supported by the Andhra Prohibition Committee of 1954. This was one of the only two really independent committees that examined the question of Prohibition on its merits, the other being the Madhya Pradesh Committee of 1952. The Andhra Committee states, "There is overwhelming evidence that the enforcement of Prohibition has been a definite failure. The main cause of such failure is the lack of public opinion in its favour. The public make a distinction between drunkenness and drink. They look down on those who get drunk. They respect those who do not drink. But they do not feel that mere drinking is a social or individual evil, which they should actually condemn and help to put down. . . . The public regard theft or murder as offences against society, but do not look on drinking as such. Such public spirit as operates in ordinary criminal offences does not do so in regard to the enforcement of Prohibition. There is also a psychological reaction against the coercion introduced by the law of Prohibition. Not one villager among the numerous villagers we met in the several villages we visited expressed himself or herself in favour of the enforcement of Prohibition. In the result, Prohibition has practically ceased to prohibit."

The Madhya Pradesh Committee is equally unequivocal. "From the facts that we have been able to elicit, from the large number of witnesses, both official and non-official, there is not a vestige of doubt that active support of the people was totally lacking. . . . Even Congressmen, who believe in Prohibition as a creed and who regard drinking as immoral, admitted with remarkable candour that there was no actual support rendered by the public. . . . No religious body or group of social workers ever devote any attention to it. The fact appears to be that the vast majority of the people are not habitual drinkers and most of them are teetotallers; and they have been used to the sight of other people drinking, as permitted by their custom and, consequently, they see nothing in their act so grave as to impel them to go out of their way to report against them and incur their ill-will. . . The position at present is that we have a law in the statute book, but it is honoured more in the breach than in observance. Public support can only spring from a rational conviction, which is totally absent. Profession and practice are wide apart and the public attitude is conspicuous by its apathy."

It is quite true that, despite the public speeches of legislators and others, there is no solid large-scale opinion against drinking. Even exceptionally law-abiding men, who obey fully the Prohibition law themselves, do not consider it their duty to report any breach occurring in their presence. Such information as reaches the authorities often has its origin in private grudges. In fact, whatever the unction authority may lay to its soul, in this matter, all the circumstances lead to only one conclusion: Prohibition has failed and Prohibition cannot succeed.

10-6-1956

THE BURDEN OF THE PAST

Happy the country that has no history is an observation repeated through the ages. If history is really what the greatest of historians held it to be, a record of the crimes, follies and errors of mankind, the general acceptance of the saying can be easily understood. But if history is much more, if in addition to recording crimes, follies and errors, it sheds light upon the courage, magnanimity and wisdom that have formed no small part of man's great adventure on this planet, even then the observation may well be held true, especially by those who are the heirs to fallen greatness. Crushing is the weight of history on such nations. They are weak and poor. Their ancestors were powerful and rich. Their minds turn again and again to the glory of past times, but in modern conditions they see no way of bringing the past to essential life again. They eat the bread of nostalgia and drink the wine of frustration. They realise to the full the deep truth that remembering happier things is indeed sorrow's crown of sorrow. Often then must the thoughtful among them be wishing that they had no remarkable past to plague their present, so that their present could look forward to such a future as they themselves could build, free from the dead hand of regret, the oppressive weight of unapproachable greatness.

These reflections come naturally to the visitor to Athens as he moves among its ancient monuments and modern buildings. The blue of the sky is deeper and more beautiful than any he has seen elsewhere. There is a freshness in the air that makes him draw it into his lungs in great breaths, almost savouring, so to speak, its tang. Modern Athens itself seems a bright, bustling town, its streets full, its people busy. Yet, above everything, broods the Acropolis, showing signs of perfection even in its ruins. The sadness that emanates from the comparison of what this city was with what it is, what it has meant to mankind and what it means now, darkens like a pall the minds of those who have grown up and are now living within it. The mental adjustment is difficult in the extreme and the effects of the difficulty are to be found in not a few spheres of national life, from the confused politics which have often made it impossible to obtain a stable government to the occasional supranationalism that relates claims to the long-dead past rather than the present position of the country.

Venice furnishes another example of the same phenomenon, though not of course at the same level, for Venice, while magnificent in its own way, taught mankind no high lessons of universal value. The Venetian empire spread as far as the Levant, and the Venetian fleets kept the Turks out of Europe. Venetian diplomacy was as celebrated as Venetian arms and the Doges of Venice were among the most powerful potentates of their time. Thus did a small city-state rise to fame, and in the period of its sway, it patronised art and fortified culture. The evidences of its sensitivity to beauty remain, though its greatness of soul has passed. And the present Venice lives largely on the visitors the beautiful accomplishments of its past bring to it. It has become a tourist-centre and is little more. The effect on its inhabitants is obvious. Their minds work simultaneously at different levels. They are Venetians, and therefore heirs to a great tradition; but to live, they must attract tourists and therefore, must resort to the wiles that please and draw crowds, not always discriminating, hardly ever wise. In the result, character suffers, inventiveness is depressed, and life on the whole is less estimable than if the past of the city had been obscure.

For us in India these instances have lessons. The glories of our past are by and large so distant that unless we invite them to, they need not burden our spirits. No evidence of them is to be found daily pressing upon our great centres of population. Venice and Athens must live with their dead. We, more fortunate, need care for only our living. This is not to say that we need forget our origins. The healthy tree does not forget its roots. Only it spends its time growing stronger and greener, not considering continuously, or even equally, the magnificence of its roots. Our task, like its, is before us. We can concentrate on it, without carrying the load of any complexes from the past in our subconscious. If despite this happy heritage, we insist on letting the dead past affect our thinking and our policies, making important again old, forgotten, far-off things and battles long ago, let us blame only ourselves for the lack of adequate accomplishment that will follow. We have a history, but it is not such that it can prevent us from having all the advantages conveyed in the saying about the happiness of the nation that has no history. The overcoming of us by history, sectional or national, is not likely unless we lose our sense of proportion and sacrifice the wisdom of our times at the altar of antiquity. That is a danger the present must avoid, if it wishes the country to have the future to which it is entitled by reason of its character, intellect and strength.

16-9-1955

THE INDIAN TEMPERAMENT

There is no better time for self-examination by a country than when it is full of dignitaries from abroad inflating the ego of dignitaries at home. The sounding cymbals of Siroky and Sukarno, the brazen-throated trumpet of Macmillan may in passing make sweet music to our ears. But what remains is the still small voice of our own conscience, speaking to us about ourselves. For nations as for individuals 'know thyself' is the beginning of wisdom. Let us then consider ourselves as we are and attempt to understand as far as we can the Indian temperament.

Psychologists find in temperament the characteristic phenomena of an individual's emotional nature including his susceptibility to emotional stimulation, his customary strength and speed of response, the quality of his prevailing mood and all peculiarities of fluctuation and intensity in mood. They regard these phenomena as dependent on constitutional make up, being personal qualities determined by the chemical influence of the bodily metabolism exerted upon the general working of the brain or nervous system. Temperament is thus mainly a factor of the inborn constitution.

Can a nation have a temperament? "I cannot draw up any indictment against a whole nation," said Burke, and perhaps assigning a temperament to a whole nation is equivalent to drawing up an indictment against it. Yet there can be little doubt that there are certain features in the large majority of the people of a nation that proceed from their inner constitution. However different they may be in outward appearance and even manner of living, from north to south, from east to west, the people of India have certain characteristics that together form their temperament.

The first important element in the Indian temperament is its sanguineness. The Indian is generally hopeful. Something he feels will always turn up; almost we may be termed a nation of Micawbers. This trait is to be found not least at the highest level. Consider the Second Five-Year Plan. Our planners know that at best with additional taxation and even a reasonable increase in savings they are not likely to have more than 2,000 crores. Yet they put forward a plan for 4,800 crores, hoping that somehow the funds will become available. For a long time they make no effort to get foreign aid even up to the amount they consider essential, hoping again that more or less of its own accord it too will turn up.

They decide to deficit finance to the extent of 1,200 crores, but take no steps to prevent the effect of such deficit financing in rising prices, hoping that even without any effort in the form of controls, at least on food prices and stocks, deficit financing will not produce any adverse effect on the economy. Can being sanguine go further? It is the same with most of us. We take action, often knowing that certain consequences ought to follow, but always hoping when they are unpleasant, that they will not. In fact if they do and our sanguineness receives a shock, we resent it greatly and make of it a considerable grievance, always finding some one else to blame rather than ourselves. As an offshoot of this trait, we are often inclined to promise in good faith more than it is possible to perform.

The Indian temperament is strongly extrovert. It is expressive and outward going. In it there is very little reserve or shyness. Often it has been noticed that if in any company of twelve there are four or five Indians, the conversation almost invariably will turn upon Indian subjects. This trait, too, is reflected in national policy. It might have been thought that the government of a new nation, only 10 years old, would largely concern itself with internal affairs, especially when so much within the country has to be remedied and needs the fullest and most detailed attention. But we find our government concentrating almost as much energy on foreign affairs as on internal. The world it seems to find its oyster and its best efforts are directed towards opening it up, whatever the internal state of the country and the reaction of our foreign affairs activity upon it. As often with extroverts, we also firmly believe that our own prepossessions and feelings are the best criteria to correctness and right.

Toleration is a strong element in the Indian temperament. 'Live and let live' might well be the Indian motto. This is generally true with regard to different groups within the society. At the same time, within a group, either family or caste, pressure towards compelling conformity with the prevailing mode of thought or behaviour is not unknown. Nor indeed is it always absent towards a group like the Harijans considered by all the others socially inferior. Still, very few among us feel any compulsion to tinker with or dominate over other people. Nor do we generally assume that we have an obligation to impose superior ways on those of another people. There are of course exceptions to this, as in the strong opinion of many that the aboriginals must be made to change their ways of thought and living for ours.

'Live and let live' again, although basically sound, sometimes leads to refusal to discriminate in judgment between good and evil, and therefore to regard both with equal indifference, thus by no manner of means setting a proper example to the young and inexperienced.

With toleration goes religion. Though religious feeling may not take the form of belief in any particular creed, it is always present in the Indian. The cosmic drama represented by human life arouses in him deep reverence. He respects human personality as such and finds the basis for everyday ethics in ultimate spiritual sanctions. A sense of the transitoriness of life is deeply imbued in him, and in unworldliness, he sees very great virtue. His hero is not so much the great statesman or general, the great inventor or business man, even the great poet or artist, as the unworldly sage or saint who, having little, coveting nothing, living simply, attempts to serve the people in the way he thinks best. This unworldliness as an ideal affects even the worldly to a greater extent than would be thought possible elsewhere.

Being religious, alas, does not mean for the Indian not being superstitious. By and large, the Indian temperament is as superstitious as it is religious. It finds comfort in believing in the manipulation of the unseen by strange forces. It is prepared to accept that magical means and invocations can control that which cannot be controlled by reason, judgment or foresight. The times of the day and the days of the year it readily accepts on the advice of astrologers and reading of horoscopes as being auspicious or inauspicious. To stones and jewels worn at certain periods and times it is prepared *to cede powers of protection. Even in many of the most* intellectual minds a strange dichotomy reigns between the forces of reason and unreason, a dichotomy that cannot be without adverse effect on the judgment and management of affairs.

Private virtue, the desire to look after one's relatives, castemen, townspeople in preference to other citizens, is a powerful element in the Indian temperament. In private virtue itself there is no harm if it is indulged in at the cost of the indulger. But it is certainly most damaging when its exercise is in opposition to the rightful demand of public virtue that decision shall be on merits alone, without respect of persons or parties. It then becomes an enemy of the public weal taking the forms of nepotism, favouritism, casteism, and causing disruption of cohesion and contentment in the people. Few indeed among those in authority at every level and on every count are without its strong pull, or feeling it, manage to resist it.

Justice does not find a prominent place in the Indian temperament. Weak indeed is that urge to give each man his due that is embodied in justice. A wrong done to another citizen is rarely regarded as a wrong done to oneself and therefore something to be strongly opposed. Voltaire's saying, "I disagree with every word that you say, but I shall fight to the last drop of my blood to see that you have the right to say it," finds no strong echo in the Indian mind. The just and the unjust—does the difference really mean very much? This is far oftener the view of the proper Indian temperament.

It is now for us to answer, can a nation, of the make-up of whose inborn constitution these are the most prominent features, be truly worthy? Only if it develops proper character. Unlike temperament that is inborn, character is something that grows up within us, and that in large measure, especially in its later and higher stages, we make for ourselves. Character once organised acts upon temperament, the process of its organisation being firstly the formation of sentiments and secondly the building up of these sentiments into a harmoniously co-operating system.

The character of the nation, too, must then make up for, and control, its temperament, through accepting voluntarily the right sentiments and welding them together into a proper system, the sentiments being such as are in opposition to and provide against the weaknesses of the temperament. Unless we bring this about, whatever the incense burnt by foreigners at the shrine of the virtues of this nation, its path is bound to lie mostly in shallows and in miseries.

16-1-1958

PRAISE BY FOREIGNERS

To express exaggerated appreciation of those in positions of power and dignity is a common human characteristic. The worldly-wise justify it on the ground that it tends to lubricate the conduct of affairs, and often conduces to goodwill in places where that can be most useful. One of the greatest leaders of the Tory Party, Benjamin Disraeli, was in favour of emphasising appreciation almost in direct proportion to the importance of the person concerned. When it came to the highest, he counselled laying it on with a trowel.

His advice seems to have been taken to heart by an eminent British Tory leader of our own times, Mr. Butler, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has been paying a short visit to this country on his way back from the Commonwealth Conference at Sydney. Mr. Butler speaks of those in authority here in no measured terms. Some of our Ministers, according to him, are men of genius. He obviously enjoys laying it on with a trowel! *He knows it can do him or his country no harm.* On the contrary, it may turn out to be very useful, for even those invulnerable to other lures have been known to be won over by flattery, more especially when it is put forth not personally, but in bluff, hearty fashion to the outside world. Nor is Mr. Butler's a solitary example. Other instances are not lacking of exaggerated tributes, although Mr. Butler, as perhaps is fitting in his position, outdoes them all.

The thinking Indian is naturally gratified to find other people holding so high an opinion of the members of his Government, and he would undoubtedly welcome this recognition by the outside world if it was in consonance with what he knew to be correct and deserved. He himself has little doubt that in many matters the Government as a whole has done well, that in fact conditions could have been much worse, and he is duly grateful under Providence to the Government for its attempts at the maintenance of a stable, united, secular, democratic state in which the rule of law and civil liberty prevail by and large and in which considerable effort is being made, though often misdirectly towards amelioration of the people's condition. He would be the first to assess at its true value any attempt by outsiders not to give credit to his Government for its real achievements.

And yet he can scarcely repress a shudder of disconcertment when he comes across the over-emphasis from foreign sources which ought to know better. He cannot help feeling that probably they do, and that, therefore, a strong element of insincerity is present in their praise. That in itself, however regrettable, does not disturb him very greatly, for he realises that foreigners are after all adept at diplomacy.

What he is concerned with is the effect of these overwrought tributes on the men to whom they are paid. He realises, with a feeling not altogether unlike despair, that the recipients of these compliments are often not content to regard them as mere compliments, but are so deeply affected by them that they begin to believe in their truth, and even to regulate their conduct and the management of the affairs entrusted to them as if they really were what the compliments suggest they might be.

Moreover, it is not unknown for tributes and compliments from foreigners to become, in the minds of those to whom they are paid, shields against the complaints and criticisms of their own people. More than one Minister, both at the Centre and in the States, has been heard to say "Well, people criticise us for not doing this, that and the other. But see what the foreign visitors say! They have no hesitation in telling us that we have done and are doing a very good job. Let our people take a lesson from this." In other words, the foreigners' tributes become a kind of certificate to be shown to the natives in disproof of their disapproval, and to be laid to one's own heart as consolation for the ungratefulness of these unnecessarily critical native wretches.

There can be little doubt that this is very unhealthy. The complacency and pride that foreigners' tributes seem to produce in authoritative quarters are qualities highly detrimental to good administration. They blind the eyes of the mind, and prevent proper understanding of actual conditions and situations, so that the taking of effective measures to deal with the real problems of the country is prevented or at least put off. Moreover, they induce in some ordinary people, unaccustomed to examine problems on their own, a quite unjustified feeling of satisfaction. "Mr. Butler, who really knows, says our Ministers are wonderful. Well, then, they must be," may be the reaction of quite a number of average citizens who are thus induced to give up that vigilance which is essential for the proper working of democracy.

It is not known to what extent foreigners from whose lips drip fulsome praise are aware of the amount of damage they do. Perhaps, if they were, they would refrain in their own interests—since for their own sakes a contented India with a rising standard of living is essential —from this particular activity, pleasant no doubt to them but dangerous to all those on whom they practise it.

It may be worth while to put Mr. Butler's tribute in proper perspective by examining the achievements on the basis of which he seems to have paid it. He mentions three points: increased food production, control of inflation, and implementation of the Five-Year Plan. Now a great deal has been made of the fact that in 1952-53 foodgrains production rose by 4.4 million tons over that of 1951-52. It has been sought to show that this is quite an extraordinary change, and has been due solely to the efforts of Government. In reality, an increase or decrease of 10 per cent in the total production of a country so very largely dependent on rainfall is by no manner of means an extraordinary phenomenon. Moreover, the production of an earlier year, 1949-50, was only one million tons less than that of 1952-53.

When people talk of control of inflation, they might remember that a great deal of the present inflation would not have been there at all had it not been for the action of Government itself, which by decontrolling in 1947, caused a tremendous rise in prices. Had it not done so, had it carried on the policy it had inherited, the financial and economic condition of India would admittedly have been infinitely better. It is true, of course, that in recent years Government policy has not been directed towards allowing a runaway inflation. In other words, a much worse situation which might have developed has not been allowed to do so.

That is about as much as can rightly be said, and for this no doubt the Government deserves commendation. There has, however, been no genuine attempt to reduce prices generally. On the other hand, a comparison of indices in January this year and last year shows a rise in the general index of 23.2 points, in that of food articles of 25.5 points, in that of industrial raw materials of 58.9 points, in that of semi-manufactured goods of 18.4 points, in that of miscellaneous articles of 93.9 points and in that of manufactured goods of 0.6 point. As to the implementation of the Five-Year Plan, it will suffice to note that large sums which should have gone into productive purposes remain unutilised.

The Government and people of India should alike remember that in this matter of the views of foreigners, the only right course for a mature nation is to examine criticism carefully and without prejudice, but to disregard praise entirely. The greater the enthusiasm felt for such praise, the more emphatic the inferiority complex revealed.

11-2-1954

LESSONS FROM BUDDHA

Would Gautama have approved the spending of about two and half crores of rupees to celebrate any occasion, however auspicious? Clearly he would not have. Such conduct would have seemed to him to be related to that one of the two extremes that he deprecated, "luxury, low, vulgar, common, ignoble and useless." Indeed his greatness lay in rejecting all extremes. He was equally opposed to "self-torture, painful, ignoble and useless."

The enlightenment of the Middle Path was what he taught, the Middle Path being attained by eight steps, right understanding, right purpose, right speech, right conduct, right vocation, right effort, right alertness, right concentration.

This week, then, dedicated to his name, would be celebrated much more according to his wishes, if his admirers were to adhere quietly to these principal points of his guidance rather than spend their time making speeches in large gatherings and indulging in what, according to his view, would have seemed fairly futile tamashas.

Gautama held that everyone's salvation consisted of, and depended entirely on, modification and growth of his own inner nature and that these could be brought about only by the individual's own self-control and diligence. Briefly, character was the key to salvation. All of us, including those who do not accept the Buddhist view of existence as unhappiness caused by continuous selfish craving, can well accept the emphasis on the building up of character that is, in the Buddha's teaching, the cure for the evils attendant on life, and indeed for life itself.

Looked at from this point of view, there seems very little doubt that the decision to set aside this week for detailed contemplation of the Buddha's thought was justified, despite the comparatively small number of his followers in India. Some are inclined to find in it a political purpose, that of pleasing India's Buddhist neighbours and by making them feel that India as a whole, though not Buddhist, has the greatest appreciation for the founder of their faith, its own son, tying them closer to India's policies. Perhaps the institution of the week may have been supported in some quarters with such an idea. In any case however it can serve a very useful purpose.

There is no lack of ability among the inhabitants of this country. Human resources of a high order of ingenuity can be easily found. Of material resources too, it has almost all. What it lacks above everything is character in its people. Whether among the Government few or the commercial many, the professions or the arts, the principal failure is always in character. The blind demanding which Gautama saw as the cause of all human unhappiness is not only not suppressed, but seems to be stronger now than even in the recent past. It takes various forms, the love of power, the desire for riches, the interest in intrigue, the hatred of rivals, the inability to bear frankness, the dislike of good advice. Yet in each it is harmful to its harbourer, and through his thoughts and actions to the world around him. Also the more important and significant his position, the *greater the harm that is caused.*

This week then might well be spent by all of us, and more especially by those in leading positions among us, in deep and humble introspection into our acts and thoughts, with a view to recognising them for what they are, admitting the error in them at least to our own naked souls, and thereby proceeding to make reparation for the past by amending thought for the future, examining ourselves clear-sightedly and setting aside arrogance and interest, so that we may be led on to right behaviour.

Another lesson, too of Buddha's seems peculiarly appropriate to us in this country at the present time. Our future depends indeed upon the avoidance of unnecessary speculation, *the recognition of our real tasks*, and concentration upon fulfilling them. Rightly did Gautama say: "Whether the dogma obtain, Malunkyaputta, that the world is eternal or that the world is not eternal, there still remains old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief and despair." These were the problems to which he thought men ought to apply their minds and which they ought to conquer through the improvement of their character. Their manifestations in various forms and guises are present amongst us in innumerable strength. They provide essentially the raw material of politics, government and social change. The recognition by the powerful of these as our real tasks in preference to interesting flights of fancy and heart-warming wishful thinking, and concentration by them on the solution of the problems they give rise to, leading to the betterment of the condition of the people as a whole, *would be perhaps the most worth while gift* they could make to the Buddha's memory.

The tragedy of all religions is the tragedy of human incapacity. Spontaneity soon gets lost in the institutionalism with which men seek to cover the essential faith. Buddhism, too, has become a church, widespread and powerful. Yet right up to the last did Buddha call for self-reliance. His deepest appeal was always to the unconquerable spirit of Man. "Those who shall be a lamp unto themselves, relying upon themselves only and not relying upon any external help, but holding fast to the truth as their lamp, and seeking their salvation in the truth alone, it is they who shall reach the very topmost heights."

24-5-1956

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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PLUS C'EST LA MÊME CHOSE

The Communist Congress addresses, and especially the party secretary Khrushchev's speech, have aroused delight in many quarters. "The young lambs bound as to the tabor's sound." The future they feel is assured and they can joyously leave behind thoughts of grief. Stalin greatly reduced in stature, two of his most important writings held mistaken, belief in collective leadership as against the cult of personality emphasised, the doctrine of the inevitability of war declared untenable, the possibility of the achievement of socialism in some countries through parliamentarian methods recognised, a new age has dawned. And so Aneurin Bevan and Jawaharlal Nehru, friendly interpreters of the Stalin regime, rejoice in the "normalcy" they see approaching and are excited about the change of outlook and policy the speeches betoken.

The words of men in power are often impressive, but the wise refuse to be impressed until they have seen their deeds. Words, though, are often useful in shedding a light on the nature of those using them and nothing perhaps indicates better the type of men the Soviet leaders are than their references to Stalin after his death. Consider the facts. Stalin was their undisputed chief for about thirty years. Under his aegis, their country and cause made great advances. Many of them were among his chief lieutenants, almost all he raised to high positions. He was cruel and ruthless, but they readily worked with him and never showed themselves more averse than he to cruelty and ruthlessness. Their adulation of him knew no bounds. Yet, now that he is no more, they, the inheritors of his power and glory, they, who but for him would never have had that power, devote very special pains to denigrating him and his deeds. Khrushchev, bursting with his own self-importance, has the impudence to class him with the satellite leader, Gottwald and the little known Japanese, Tokuda, as "some most prominent figures of the communist movement," whom the assemblage should respect by standing for a moment, while his close co-adjutor, the crafty Mikoyan, who must many a time have trembled at Stalin's glance, now courageously criticises his writings. What can we say of such men? There is something deeply degrading about them. Those who honour their great dead thus can scarcely be men of honour. Those whose loyalty is so short-lived can scarcely be loyal to their promises.

Much is sought to be made of the great change to "collective leadership." Stalin ruled alone, they say, we rule together. From this much good must flow. But the point at issue is, apart from the personalities involved, simple. It can be narrowed down to a single question, "Is an oligarchical tyranny necessarily better than a one-man tyranny?" For let there be no mistake about it, the basic tyranny remains. Only the number of the tyrants alters. There is nothing in history to show that a small group with absolute power is less likely to be oppressive to its subjects or dangerous to the world than one man with absolute power. The corrupting influence of such power will probably be felt equally in both.

The collective leadership, again, does not even mean that all the members of the supreme governing body have equal authority. It is obvious that Khrushchev dominates the body and that some of its members.

Malenkov and Molotov, are there on sufferance and have from time to time to recant their heresies in public in order to remain there. The collective leadership form is convenient at present, but it would seem doubtful if it will be retained for long. Whether or not it is, the reality of naked absolutism is only too clear.

The resiling from the doctrine of the inevitability of war between the communist world and its opponents for the eventual success of the communist cause can well be regarded as the triumph of the deterrent effect of the hydrogen bomb. Having told the Soviet people how immensely destructive the bomb is, it is obviously sound policy to say, "Ah, but the bomb needn't come into use, the victory can be ours without war." The real point to note is that though war is not considered inevitable any longer, communist domination is and the spreading of that domination. Conflict in every form, short of suicidal global war, is to continue, and even as regards that, there is repeated affirmation of complete preparation. Real peace is neither expressed nor intended. Its climate is very different from the confusing weather Khrushchev and his meteorologists foretell. Under varying forms, the cold war is to continue and to be pressed on with single-minded determination.

Equally baseless would seem to be the belief that because the possibility of parliamentary methods leading to socialism in some countries is recognised, communist parties outside the communist dominated countries will change their nature and allegiance and become ordinary political parties, willing to abide by the verdict of the vote and to recognise the constitution as their final arbiter. Mikoyan is fairly clear on this. His condemnation of "reformists" and "evolutionists" is as thoroughgoing as was Lenin's many years ago. By socialism, moreover, the Soviet leaders understand their own system, for as Molotov discovered to his cost, according to the theory prevailing at the moment, socialism has already been achieved in the Soviet Union. Communist parties coming into power through the vote would accordingly reproduce Soviet socialism in their own countries, in other words, no more free elections, no rule of law, no civil liberties, no freedom of expression. The collective leadership of the chiefs of the party would continue, tempered only by instructions from Moscow.

It is interesting to find that despite talk of non-interference in the affairs of other states and great emphasis on friendship for some countries including India, nothing is said about the relationship between the central communist headquarters and communist parties abroad. They are presumably to continue to receive aid and guidance as in the past, to be the "shock-brigades" of the Soviet Union the now not-so-admired Stalin termed them at the last Congress in 1952. Indeed the heads and representatives of many of them including India were present at the Congress to congratulate Stalin's successors and degraders as fulsomely as they had Stalin in the past. Foolish indeed, would be the Government, which counted on a real change in the Communist party of its country because of the Moscow declarations on parliamentary activities. Rejecting Stalin to some extent, the current Bolsheviks turn to Lenin with especial respect. No one was so certain of the necessity of underground activity as Lenin. "Legal work", he declared, "must be combined with *illegal* work. The party which does not carry out systematic, all-sided illegal work, in spite of the laws of the bourgeoisie and of bourgeois parliaments, is a party of traitors and scoundrels." This was in an attack on the British socialist party and its leader MacDonald. Lenin also said the communists "must go among all classes of the population, must despatch units of their army in all directions." They must have their own men everywhere, among all social strata, in all positions.

Non-communist countries and their Governments have indeed much to reflect on, little to rejoice about, in the proceedings of the Communist Congress at Moscow. The offensive against them, far from being withdrawn, is to be intensified. Its strategy is to be more subtle, its tactics more deceiving. Their own peoples are to be used against them in ever-increasing degrees. In the circumstances they might find it advantageous to consider Vishinsky's definition of true internationalism given as late as 1948: "A real internationalist is one who brings his sympathy and recognition up to the point of practical and maximum help to the U.S.S.R. in support and defence of the U.S.S.R. by every means and in every possible form. This is the holy duty of every honest man everywhere and not only of the citizens of the U.S.S.R."

28-2-1956

WHY ? ASKS STALIN

Stalin: Please don't pass by, Lenin, as you usually do. Today I must talk to you.

Lenin: You will excuse me, I am sure. You cannot wish me to explain to you again that conversation with you gives me no pleasure. Though time is endless here, nothing compels one to spend it in being bored.

Stalin: No, stop, I insist. I am deeply perplexed, disturbed beyond bearing. I seek your help. Remember, whatever our differences in your last years or my treatment of those dear to you, I kept your memory green. I paid you great honour. I recognised you as the true prophet of our faith in direct succession to Marx. In your name and his, I built up our mighty empire. Prophet and guide, do not leave me. Surely a few incidents a long time ago, incorrect though my behaviour may have been, cannot rankle still.

Lenin: Joseph Vissarovitch Djugishvilli, half-educated runaway priest and rustic boor, you remain what you were. The same cunning, the same obstinacy. How much trouble I would have saved myself had I had you shot when they caught you breaking into the Tsar's liquor stores after we had declared total prohibition. *But you* looked at me slyly and said "I must drink, I am a Georgian. I can't work without drink." And I, throwing aside principle, said "Oh, let him drink." But get this into your thick head. *It is not because of what you did* to me or mine that I don't want to be with you. It is because you are dull. Your mind has no fire, no spirit. You are of the earth, a clod. When there is such a *variety of rare talk here, who but a fool* would waste his time listening to your rigmarole of victories and purges and conspiracies. However, for once, as you will, speak.

Stalin (to himself): I may be a clod but I get my way. (To Lenin): I tell you I am racked with pain. It is as if an eagle's beak were at my liver. This news from Moscow; those slaves, Khrushchev, Mikoyan and the others. If I could only get these hands round their necks. They degrade me, they destroy me, they will not even leave me courage! I, Stalin, a coward, scared! Traitors and scoundrels, may the dogs gorge on their entrails while they still live! And all the time my brain is on fire with one question, why, why, why? I left our country and the international Communist movement on the top of the wave. Great had been their successes under my guidance. I left them a policy to follow, and a sound man, Malenkov, to take charge. Khrushchev, always a pusher, and his associates, working with Malenkov, got rid of Beria, a mistake in my view, but not too serious. Khrushchev and Bulganin then pushed down Malenkov, but didn't get rid of him, a terrible mistake as they'll find out in time. They have done what they liked, struggling for power, pushing, pulling, working together also for the party and the cause, I admit. I wasn't there, I didn't impede them. They could have had their own way without dragging my name in the dust. My reputation behind them would have made them stronger as yours made me. I can think of no explanation for this fantastic happening. Tell me, can you?

Lenin: Were you kind to these comrades who worked for you? Did you treat them as human beings?

Stalin: Kind! Human beings! What sort of talk is this! You are a Bolshevik. So am I. So are these men. With us it is not individuals. It is the cause. They served it as I wanted them to. I urged them on with curses and threats. Those who failed me and the cause, I broke. For that there can be no grievance. They knew well what would happen. You did the same thing, too. We must. Ah, I see you are having one of your subtle jokes, laughing at my slow mind, but let me tell you these bourgeois phrases sound ugly on your lips. And my question, where is the answer?

Lenin: It was after your appearance here, wasn't it, that it became quite clear that if the inevitable war between the communist and capitalist worlds, which I had foreseen with our ultimate triumph, took place, because of the hydrogen bomb we would be as completely destroyed as they?

Stalin: Yes. There would be no triumph. I am afraid you didn't think of that.

Lenin: *Had this been clear when you were still in* charge, what would you have done? Given up our design of world domination, perhaps; been content with *retirement within our own* borders and tried to live at peace with the other nations, especially our strong opponents, the United States and Britain?

Stalin: Really! Is it Lenin speaking? Have you grown so soft here? I can't believe my ears. You're talking arrant nonsense. Give up our design? Of course not. I can't win by war, but is that to be the end? I'll get what we've always wanted without war. You know, of course, we've never had any strict division between war and peace. With us one is but a continuation of the other. Our conspiratorial activity in fact is at its best in time of so-called peace. The Communist parties in countries outside our sway, my shock-brigades, as I called them, with all their *fellow-travellers, then have the* best opportunities to spread the gospel and infiltrate. I had started to create a favourable climate of opinion *by emphasising our special* brand of peace-mindedness, and by propaganda and diplomacy I would soon have put the other side completely in the wrong, with the neutrals and even their own people continuously questioning and weakening them. No, Comrade Lenin, I would still have moved on to our goal and succeeded. Why, even as it is, people in many parts of the world were already applauding my fights for peace. The most amusing thing I heard on arrival here was that Nehru had with great feeling paid tribute to me as a Man of Peace.

Lenin: Nehru? Ah, yes, I've heard of him. The Indian, with romantic notions about us in his head and a rose in his button-hole. They tell me he thinks all you've got to do to establish peace is to sign a non-aggression agreement. Your denigrators went to his country recently and did splendidly, I believe. He was most helpful to them and the cause. That's the point, you see. They haven't given up the aim, any more than you would have. They're good Communists, too, and despite your success with Nehru and others, Uncle Joe, (I'm glad to see you blush. You didn't think I knew that) far cleverer than you. If they have to win without global war, their principal weapon must be words. And to be effective, words must be believed. The *bona fides* of the speakers must be accepted. Is that right?

Stalin: Yes. True enough, but still that doesn't explain their treatment of me.

Lenin: To the world, you are the symbol of the Communist. All your crudities, cruelties, terror, aggression are associated with the name. But if the game is to be won, the Communist must appear something very different, the modern man, sensible, trustworthy. Gullible the bourgeois world is, always thinking in the short-term and of temporary advantage. Yet your mark on its mind was too deep for it to accept whole-heartedly the new version of the Communist. So long as you were venerated, there would always be suspicion. And so, the idol of the great Stalin, "genius-like architect of Communism," without whose new knowledge Mikoyan found it "unthinkable to live, create and struggle," must be shattered completely. Come, now, you must agree it is a most excellent stroke. What, say the bourgeois, they overthrow their god! Then they overthrow all he stood for. They have changed, they have truly changed. Down with all barriers. We must help them. The prodigal is home again. Let us embrace him. Let us kiss him on both cheeks, as indeed do the English girls your podgy protégé, Malenkov, as he keenly surveys the power installations of Britain, talking amicably of peace, old associations and good business to come. Ah, it's a fine school we bring up our men in. At any moment, they act so convincingly that the average bourgeois *government, nay even our own people outside* the party, easily forget what they really are and what they said but a little while ago. You understand, now, I hope? No? It's your vanity which keeps on hurting. Well, one more try. How does the Communist *define good* action? That which helps forward the Communist cause and party. You agree that if we are to win, our reliance must be primarily on what the bourgeois call deceit. Once they can be induced to believe and accept our new version, the end is certain. In their bewilderment they will not even know from whom heavier and heavier blows come. Europe, Asia, Africa, all will show quickly the effects of our initiative. The first battle in this war of deceit is your denigration. It will help forward the cause. It is the true Communist good.

Stalin: You're right. It's all for the cause. I mind much less.

Lenin: Of course, you know, it need not be permanent. We are always rewriting history. Some years hence, with the world at our feet, you are bound to be praised afresh as the great genius and hero-leader. But don't disturb me again. Already I've missed the music I'd promised myself today. On earth, I used to long for music but had to ration myself, for it said strange things and would have unmanned me for the terrible deeds I felt I must do for our cause. And, here, when its effect wouldn't matter, there have to be people like you.

27-3-1956

ZHUKOV'S FALL

Those who misunderstand the rulers of the Soviet Union have only themselves to blame. Rarely have the heads of a great state and the moving spirits of a tremendous missionary organisation made so clear their nature and their purpose. Throughout the forty years of the existence of the Soviet Union, they have on occasion after occasion demonstrated their strong adherence to the Communist faith and their determination not to let any scruples stand in the way of its overcoming the world. Despite occasional propaganda barrages in contrary term to cause their opponents to believe in the relaxation of their main aim, this has been their recurrent theme. If still, on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the birth of the Soviet State, there are people who continue to maintain that the Bolsheviks are not what they have shown themselves to be, and do not mean what they make clear their intentions are, of such the comment is permissible that having eyes, they see not; having ears, they hear not; having minds, they refuse to apply them in reasoning.

"Stalin was very much interested in the assessment of Comrade Zhukov as a military leader. He asked me often for my opinion of Zhukov. I told him then 'I have known Zhukov for a long time, he is a good general and a good military leader.' After the war Stalin began to tell things about Zhukov. Among others the following: You praise Zhukov but he does not deserve it. It is said, before each operation on the front, Zhukov used to behave as follows: He used to take a handful of earth, smell it and say 'we can begin the attack,' or the opposite, 'the planned operations cannot be carried out.' I stated at that time 'Comrade Stalin, I do not know who invented this; but it is not true.' It is possible that Stalin himself invented these things for the purpose of minimising the role and military talents of Marshal Zhukov."

Who said this? Why, none other than Comrade Khrushchev! He said it when indicting Stalin at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in February 1956. Since then, largely because of the assistance Zhukov gave him, he has been able to dispose of his rivals—Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovitch. But where stands Zhukov now, where the good general, the good military leader, the valued friend? Zhukov has been degraded. Deprived of his command, thrust out of his position in the party, his whereabouts unknown, he waits probably the same fate as that of the old Bolsheviks against whom he came to Khrushchev's aid.

And what has been his crime? As usual with the Communists there is no *statement of the charges, no* possibility of open defence. Obliquely, we are told he attempted to belittle the role of the Communist party in the armed forces. In other words, if true, to alleviate to *some extent the dictatorship* of the Communist Party over the armed forces and to give them some measure of internal autonomy.

That Zhukov may well have wanted to reduce the heavy strain imposed by the Party on every aspect of the lives of the members of the defence forces is believable. That he was in any way disloyal to the Soviet Union or to the Communist Party of which he has always been a staunch member and supporter, is highly unlikely. The real reason for his degradation and removal may well lie elsewhere. With the peculiar mentality bred by a lifetime of deceit and plotting, Khrushchev probably began to dread his popularity with the people and his influence in the armed forces. Seeing him as a rival in the fight for power that has been going on among the men of the Kremlin since Stalin's death, Khrushchev may have thought it best to take advantage of his absence on a mission to Albania and Yugoslavia to strike a mortal blow. The future now seems clear. For Zhukov, at best, the obscurity of some very minor post in some out of the way place; for Khrushchev, a further and most significant step forward on the path to sole dictatorship !

Many liberal foreign sympathisers with the Soviet Union found great satisfaction in Zhukov's popularity with the Russian people and growing ascendancy on the Soviet scene. Zhukov they said joyfully, was regarded by those who knew him as a 'Barin,' one of Nature's noblemen. Though of humble origin he was a truly gracious personage, and his increasing power was not only a sign of present good but gave great hope for the future. His weight would certainly, they felt, always be in favour of liberalisation internally and better relations abroad. Even the savage brutality in Hungary, when he is said to have been as strongly for repression as any of his colleagues, did not shake their optimistic view,

To them his fall must be a great blow. But will they draw the bitter lesson from it? Will they realise that the Communist regime by its very nature must spew out any one who has the least element of conscience left in him, that its practice must conform to its theory which holds that there is no right or wrong beyond service to the Party, that alone being good which serves the Party's cause and that alone bad which hinders it.

Whatever the past, it is to be hoped that the Indian Government, whose chief openly discounted at a recent Press Conference the vitality of the Communist faith and hailed the socalled demise of international Communism, will now learn from Zhukov's fall. Communism, internal or international, is far from being dead. The Communist Party, vital in the Soviet Union and dominant over a third of the globe, is as determined as ever to bring countries not yet under its control within its sway. It plans not just in terms of a year or a quinquennium. It is prepared to wait and work patiently for results. Whether it operates in Korea or in Poland, in Albania or in India, it remains basically the same. Statesmen who do not realise these facts and shape their policy accordingly, are not far from letting their countries be taken over gradually, even perhaps imperceptibly, by the Communists.

On the eve of their fortieth anniversary, the Soviet leaders have hoisted in the shape of the Zhukov incident a danger signal for which the world ought to be duly thankful. It is important that we in India, Government and people alike, recognise it as such. We can be reinforced in our will to do so by the response of the various European Labour Parties to Mr. Khrushchev's recent appeal to them to restrain their Governments, who he alleged were threatening peace. Although living in the very mouth of danger, they, without exception, repudiated him completely, pointing out, in the words of the Dutch Party's reply, that it was he himself who with his system of Government and Domination was threatening peace.

We can also be reinforced by the considered judgment of so sober, patriotic, charitable minded and disinterested a fellow countryman as Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, who describing his own experience says: "Still wedded to Marxism this new policy filled my heart with joy and sent my hopes rising high. I began to dream of the possibility of the United Socialist Communist Party. A compact was arrived at with the Communist party of India according to which Communists were elected to the A.I.C.C. and other Congress bodies with Congress Socialist Party support and in the Trade Union Movement it was agreed to work together. . . . The disastrous consequences of that policy are well known. We learnt, some of us with not a little regret, that there cannot be any unity with an 'official' Communist Party (i.e. a party affiliated to the Comintern or approved of by the Kremlin); that such a Communist party is not a free agent but a tool of Moscow; that the primary loyalty of the members of such a party is first to Russia and only then to anybody else; that when the Communist parties talk of united front, it is always a ruse and at best a temporary policy dictated by the exigencies of the situation; that the unswerving goal is always monolithic Communist rule; that the Communists can never think of sharing power with any one, except as a makeshift with convenient stooges."

7-11-1957

FAILURE IN UNDERSTANDING

Even more tragic than the cruel and treacherous murders of Imre Nagy and his associates has been the reaction of almost the whole non-Communist world to them. This world proclaims that it is shocked. President Eisenhower is shocked, Mr. Dulles is shocked, Mr. Macmillan is shocked, Mr. Gaitskell is shocked, the German, the French, the Italian, the Turkish, the Swiss, non-Communists are all shocked. Mr. Nehru is shocked, the Congress Party is shocked, the Praja Socialists are shocked. The Congress for Cultural Freedom, in Europe and India alike, is shocked, and with very, very rare exceptions, all the reputed Soviet experts are shocked.

Now when is a person shocked? When something generally disagreeable which he had not expected at all, happens. One of the basic constituents in shock is great *surprise.* *When a man of eighty* who has been ailing for some time, dies, a person may be saddened, he is not shocked. Even if the man has not been ailing, it is not a shock. That people of that age should die is natural. But when a man of forty in very good *health suddenly* collapses, there is good reason to be shocked. The very unexpected, the really surprising has happened. Obviously then, the murders of Nagy, Maleter and the others must have come as a great surprise, something very unexpected, to all the individuals and institutions who proclaim themselves shocked. They must have regarded the likelihood of their happening as quite unthinkable.

This, then, is why the reaction to the murders is an even greater tragedy than the murders. It shows that *the free world at its highest* and most knowledgeable has after all these years and all its experience, such extremely little understanding of the Communists that when they take action, which to them is the most ordinary and natural, *it is surprised beyond measure and deeply shocked.* In other words it just has not appreciated the real nature of its most deadly opponents. Or perhaps, even such part of it as understood it at one time has allowed itself to be led by their strategy and tactics to forget it so completely as to think of them as being very different from what they really are.

That Nagy and his companions were bound to disappear sooner or later was clear as soon as they were seized on leaving the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest. It just could not have suited the Communist Party to leave them alive. They were too dangerous; they carried the aura of successful rebellion, however short the period of success. That they must go was probably decided at the moment of their capture or even before, *and it cannot have made the least difference that at that* time the deciders were not exactly the same as those in power now, that they included, for instance, Zhukov, Molotov, Bulganin, who since then have felt the weight of the highest Communist displeasure themselves, though not to the same extent yet as the unfortunate Nagy.

What must be realised is that on such points, it matters little who is in power. Whoever is in power must act in that particular way. The Communist mystique, the whole body of Communist tradition, the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of expedients of the Communists, demand it. Not to so act would be not to be a Communist, and no Communist in power under the eyes of other Communists, even assuming some doubts rose in his bosom, would dare to appear a renegade.

Almost certainly, of course, there would be no doubts. For what is the most fundamental faith of the Communist? No act, thought or belief is good or evil in itself. Anything is good which helps forward the cause of the Party; everything evil which hinders it. The continued existence of Nagy and his friends certainly did not help the Party; their execution on the other hand probably would, by being an example to dissuade others who might foolishly be similarly inclined.

The moment this was apparent, the fate of the Hungarian patriots was settled. All that remained over was probably when exactly the firing-party was to be called out. This would be a point for executive decision. Clearly the greatest possible advantage had to be extracted from the prisoners before they were sent to meet their doom. They had to be examined, tortured, broken, made to tell everything, caused to implicate others inconvenient to the regime, confess whatever they were told to, and then after endless humiliation and degradation, polished off. Sometimes the process may take five years, sometimes a few months, but it comes to the same in the end.

This is the normal course of Communist conduct and he who is shocked thereby has either always been ignorant or has allowed himself to be deceived.

To recriminate and say to the Communists "But you promised this, and said that, and you haven't kept your word, and really, *this is too bad," only arouses their* contempt. They know very well what they promised and said. They also know that they never intended to keep their promises or stick to their statements. It would not have been, in their sense "good" to do so. It would have been positively wrong, "evil."

They are amused that you haven't the sense to see this, and are deeply gratified that they have taken you in so *completely; unless, of course, they feel that you* knew all along that they would never keep their promise and are just being hypocritical about it. In any case, it would be more useful for the free world to refrain from further exercises in futility and attempt to consider why it is so easily and so often deceived by the Communists.

Towards the end of the Roman Empire, when his world was falling in bits around his ears, a Roman asked "Why is the world deceived?" and he answered "Because it wishes to be deceived." That reason is perhaps the most valid of all today too. The free world, including *almost all its leaders, just does not seem to have the* mental stamina to go on believing firmly year after year that it has an implacable enemy whose whole purpose is to destroy it, that this enemy cannot in the very nature of things be appeased, that its only hope, therefore, is, while being militarily as strong as possible, to be continuously on guard against subversion, infiltration, internal Communist parties and such other weapons as *make the period when actual fighting is not going on a* time of war without a battlefield, make, in Lenin's words "peace but a continuation of war." Being tired out mentally, it keeps on saying to itself, "Oh, no, it can't be. Really, they're men too. They must want to relax. Surely some arrangement is possible. Let's trust them. Perhaps then they'll trust us too. They don't want to destroy us. That's an old story. Now there's the liberalising Khrushchev, and see how the Communists read. They must have changed. See their acts are different." And from every little sign, it deduces hopefully a change of heart. It can't bear the strain or at least it finds the strain very difficult to bear, and so it hopes, and from hope to wishful thinking and even to building action on such thinking, is but a little way.

When a characteristic Communist act, like the Nagy Maleter murders, shakes such people out of their hopefully forward-looking frame of mind, they are outraged. Shocking, they say. They hate to believe it, but the Communists seem to be just as bad as they always were. How terrible! Must they go back then on their revised ideas and revise them again? No, say most. This is probably just an aberration. Continue to build on Khrushchev's liberalisation. And thus, despite the struggle for power in the Soviet hierarchy, despite even the banishment of Zhukov on whom so many relied so zealously, despite these last murders perhaps, they go on deceiving themselves, refusing to recognise the Communist determination and method, closing their eyes to the Communists as they really are, by all these greatly strengthening the very power and cause, the main aim of which is to bring about their end.

10-7-1958

9

THE NEW CHINA

Men are we and must needs rejoice when the shade of that which was once great begins to become great again. Elation is natural, especially for Asians, at the revival of a country like China, the birthplace of so ancient and truly humane a culture that the eighteenth century philosopher Leibnitz could urge that Chinese missionaries should be brought to Europe to teach the aim and practice of *natural theology*.

And yet, the recent increase in the number and vociferousness of the encomiasts of the New China in Delhi cannot leave the student of affairs altogether undisturbed. It is, of course, always to be expected that delegates returning from a goodwill mission should stress the strong points of a country which has entertained them hospitably and should say very little about its demerits. A balanced judgment can scarcely be expected, more especially when most, if not all, of those forming the mission, know nothing of the language and very little of the history of the foreign land visited.

What is depressing, however, is the absence of balance in those in authority, those who should have had all sources of information open to them. It would indeed be a tragedy if enthusiasm for the achievements of the New China was to sweep them away into a completely uncritical admiration. From admiration to imitation is often a short step. It becomes all the more necessary therefore to consider exactly the nature of this New China and the implications to us of its emergence as a powerful neighbour.

Despite all ambassadorial glosses, an impartial examination of the Chinese situation discloses that the New China is as much a Communist State as Russia. Its leadership and the driving force of its government come from the Communists. The Communist doctrine may not perhaps as in the case of Russia descend to the people through the line Marx-Lenin-Stalin. That may be extended to Marx-Lenin-StalinMao, but essentially there is very little other difference. It follows that the form of government in China is authoritarian. The institutions of the State are not parliamentary. The Government is not elected. It cannot be turned out except by force. It is not based on the rule of law. The will of the Government is in fact the law and no redress is possible against arbitrary action by it. There is no independent judiciary.

Moreover the State does not guarantee to all its subjects any of the rights of freedom. Mao Tse-tung himself declares that his Government is dictatorial, that reactionaries must be deprived of the right to voice their opinion, and that only the people must have that right. Since it is for him and his Government to interpret from time to time who the people are and who the reactionaries, in effect it is only he and his Government who have the right. In all these fundamentals, the New China is completely opposed to the kind of State which we, according to our Constitution, hold to be essential for our people. Our values in these matters are entirely different.

Nor in the New China has practice been less rigorous than principle. According to official Chinese figures, in 1951 alone 1,200,000 "counter-revolutionaries" have been executed, the bulk being after April. The manner of many of these executions may perhaps be taken as an indication of the spirit that animates the Government. They have often been held in public; large groups gathered together under the leadership of political workers to watch them. There was often music and dancing. Nor was it unusual, especially in the smaller towns, for students to be given a holiday to witness the spectacle. Condemned men were made to kneel in line, and a soldier walked behind shooting one at a time through the back of the head. Most of the sentences were delivered by military tribunals and there was no right of appeal.

None of the other contrivances of an authoritarian government seem missing. One development, strange to China and remarkable because of the great importance attached throughout history by the Chinese to family ties and respect for elders and seniors, has been the denouncing of husbands and fathers by wives and children. Such accusations have been made in Chinese newspapers and on occasion relatives have even broadcast them over the radio and at public meetings.

When, therefore, the achievements of the Chinese Government, the establishment of stable administration, the increase of production, the launching of large public works, the expansion of education, and the quick acquisition of technological knowledge are mentioned with enthusiastic approval, let the picture not exclude altogether the dark, inhuman side.

Achievement is not difficult for determined and able men who know what they want provided they make their will the law and are prepared to use ruthlessly the whip and the bullet. When in addition there is good organization, intensive propaganda, and the force of personal example, the minds of the masses can often be captured, so that a regime which in its origin rested only on itself can later claim to have the support of the people it lords over.

True merit for a nation like ours, accustomed to good administration and the rule of law, lies not in the abandonment of our proper values for the sake of economic advancement but in the obtaining of economic advancement while maintaining our own values. The New China may have for us lessons in the field of organization, but there can be no question that if we are to be true to ourselves, we must reject all the basic assumptions that have built it up and all the cruel practices that seem to its rulers so necessary.

The implications of a powerful China as our immediate neighbour must be recognised. China maintains an enormous army. It is possible for it to do so because, so far as can be made out, the soldier receives no proper pay. He gets his rations and a small allowance for personal expenditure. If he owns no land, the responsibility for looking after his family falls upon the village where it lives.

With direct aid and technical assistance from the Soviet Union, China continues to build up its military potential so that in spite of the demands of the Korean situation, it has been able to send forces into Tibet, the country which, brushing aside all Mr. Nehru's protests and arguments, it proceeded with great efficiency to "liberate" from "aggressive imperialist influences" a few months ago. Since India was the only country concerned, the reference presumably is to it. Reports indicate that there has been considerable military activity in Tibet including the building of landing grounds and airstrips. The ordinary person unversed in diplomatic finesse may well wonder against whom except India Tibet is being protected or is being prepared to serve as a base of operations.

As is well known, according to Chinese maps, parts of Assam and Nepal fall within Tibet and however soothing the assurances given to Mr. Nehru at a time when his support is of great value in the international field, a disputed frontier can always be converted into an excuse for aggression. A short time ago, the chief of the Central Office of the Communist Party of China Mr. Yang Shangkin expressed the belief "that, after the liberation *of Tibet, the Chinese people and the Nepalese people* will unite in closer solidarity in the common struggle for the sake of defending Asia and preserving world peace." Nor is information altogether lacking of encouraging messages to some of the hill-tribes of Assam.

The history of China shows that whenever the country has had a strong Central Government, an urge to expansion *has made itself apparent.* The governing classes moreover have generally felt a supreme contempt for "outer barbarians." These national trends are likely to be accentuated, rather than minimized, by the coming into power of the Communist regime. *A reference to* Mao Tse-tung, "the roar of his voice shakes the world," recalls the high pride of the Sublime Emperors, the Sons of Heaven. Nor do mountain barriers present any more the powerful obstacles they did in the days before aeroplanes, gliders, and paratroops.

In the whole matter of the maintenance of a liberal State in this country and of guarding against aggression, the gravest responsibility rests upon the Government of India. Its duty is clear. However friendly relations may seem, there must never be the least relaxation of vigilance. *Within the country too, such conditions must* be created as will inspire confidence in the masses and make of them the real preservers of their Constitution.

18-11-1951

SINO-SOVIET SOLIDARITY

"People's China," a magazine published by the Foreign Languages Press in Peking, gives on the first page of its issue of March 1, the text of the message of greeting "From Chairman Mao Tse-tung to Generalissimo J. V. Stalin" on the second anniversary of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of friendship, alliance and mutual assistance. The same page also carries Stalin's reply.

The Chinese message, 18 lines covering four paragraphs, is extremely cordial and full of gratitude. The Soviet reply, a short five lines, conveying hearty congratulations and wishes for the future, is much less enthusiastic. The contents and form of the messages typify the role of the two Governments, for in the curious formalism that is a feature of inter-Communist behaviour, the opportunity of such occasions is not unoften taken to demonstrate the realities of a situation. The exchange is quite clearly between the junior partner and the senior. China is the disciple and the recipient of advice and aid; the Soviet is the teacher and the giver of guidance and material assistance. Both are working for the same common end, the conversion of the governments and peoples of the world by every possible means to the faith which they themselves so firmly hold.

The adherence of China has indeed made a tremendous addition to the strength, power and effective potential of this faith. Hence, the eagerness with which many people seek for any indication of different points of view on essential matters between the two Governments. Hence, too, the wishful thinking that China will or can be induced to take an independent line, and the attempts to follow policies designed to attract to that end. There can be no doubt that those who put forward these ideas or act on the likelihood of their being correct are deceiving themselves fundamentally. A study of the history of the background and development of the leaders of the Communist movement in China and of their pronouncements from time to time cannot but make one conclude that the hope of divergence is bound to be disappointed and, *so far as can be judged, attempts to mollify the Chinese* by making various concessions, with the idea of thereby separating them from the Russians, are bound to fail.

The reasons are to be found both in the past and in the present. The leaders of China are as deeply imbued with the Marxist-Leninist doctine as the Russians. From the time of the formation of the Communist party of China, 30 years ago, they have studied it, accepting it and its developments and interpretations under Stalin as gospel truth. For the Soviet Union as the home and active laboratory of this new faith, they have both a boundless admiration and a deep sentimental attachment. The Chinese, says Mao Tse-tung, "found Marxism-Leninism a universal truth which is applicable everywhere. The face of China thus began to change. The Chinese were introduced to Marxism by the Russians. Before the October Revolution, the Chinese were not only unaware of Lenin or Stalin but did not know of Marx or Engels." Liu Shao-chi, Vice-Chairman of the Central People's Government and a Member of the Communist Party of China from 1921, says: "Finally, the reason for the victory of our Party and the Chinese Revolution which is even more unforgettable to us is the influence on China of the Russian October Revolution, the influence on the Chinese *Revolution of the theories of proletarian Socialist revolution* and Marxism-Leninism created and developed by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, the sympathy and assistance to the Chinese revolution given by the Soviet Union."

To the Chinese ruling class, the *Soviet Union* is in fact the "Big Brother," friend, philosopher and guide, with answers evolved years ago to the problems that arise today. The material aid they get is but one ground, and that not the most important, for their inclination towards it. Their veneration for it rests in the psychological inspiration, the spiritual nurture that they derive from it. They believe strongly in the global mission of the Communist religion and they do not think in patches. The success of the Soviet Union is their success. Says Mao, "The Chinese people must incline either towards the side of imperialism or towards that of Socialism. There can be no exception to this rule. It is impossible to sit on the fence; there is no third road. Not only in China but throughout the world without exception one inclines either towards imperialism or towards Socialism. Neutrality is merely a camouflage; a third road does not exist." And his Vice-Chairman, Liu Shao-chi further elucidates: "To harbour mistrust and unfriendliness towards the Soviet Union and the new Democracies led by the Communist party is extremely erroneous and harmful. To regard the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and the foreign policies of the imperialistic countries as being the same, or to confuse them and to adopt the same attitude to the Soviet Union and the new Democracies led by the Communist parties as is adopted towards imperialistic countries—this is extremely erroneous and harmful, a result of the betrayal of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism, the betrayal of proletariat internationalism and it constitutes a degeneration to the position of bourgeois nationalism."

The lesson is obvious. All those, including the Government of India, who have to deal with these two great proselytizing, authoritarian, police states must also cease to think in patches. China is not merely China, nor Russia only Russia. Both are integral and interconnected parts of the same world system, a system many of the most important values of which are very different, to say the least, from those we consider essential and desirable. The proper foundation for policy-framing should be broad comprehensive understanding rather than *ad hoc*, often disjointed, reports of conversations with personalities and appreciations based on them. An industrial exhibition, a cultural delegation, a goodwill mission, an economic conference—all these appear innocuous in themselves, taken individually. But each one is a move in a far-flung campaign directed towards the basic end of conversion to one's own faith and subversion of all others.

19-4-1952

TIBET

The security of India's northern frontiers is a matter of great concern to all the people of this country whether they live in the North, Uttar Pradesh or Punjab, or the South, Travancore or Madras. So long as Tibet, a country of about three million people with no particular military strength, remained free from outside control, that security was to a large extent ensured. There was no need for any special anxiety. A buffer state stood between India and the important powers to the north.

Today the situation is very different. Tibet has been added to the Communist China empire. India's immediate northern neighbour is now a modern military power with forces numbering over four million, equipped with the latest weapons and planes from Russia, well-seasoned by the Korean fighting. Great changes have also taken place in Tibet. A Chinese army of quite respectable strength garrisons it. Work goes ahead rapidly on military installations and barracks. Roads enabling quick and heavy traffic cross the mountains. Aerodromes have been, and are being, constructed. Communication with Asian Russia has been established by a road running along the Indian frontier. At such a time it may well be useful to cast a glance backwards. How was Tibet brought under Chinese control? We, who were and are so initmately concerned, what did we do?

The Tibetan people have often had to fight hard to retain their independence from China. In the eighteenth century, China established some measure of control. Later when China weakened, Tibet took the opportunity to regain its former freedom. On 25th November 1950, Chinese troops marched into Tibet. They soon took the country over and reduced it to the position of a Chinese province. During the first years of this century, the British who had, for their own purposes, primarily to checkmate the Russians, put forward the view that China, then a particularly weak power from which nothing was to be feared, held rights of suzerainty over Tibet but that Tibet retained complete autonomy. The exact significance of suzerainty has never been very clear in international law. The relationship has differed from instance to instance. It certainly is not sovereignty. The Chinese never formally recognised this connection, claiming always that they had sovereign rights, while the Tibetans rejected their claim, stating they were an independent people. At any rate, it is fairly certain that for about forty years before the Communist Chinese troops marched in, Tibet had been practically independent. Indian India, the successor of British India, took over the British view of Tibetan autonomy and Chinese suzerainty. As late as the end of November

1949, it maintained that Tibet had always been considered an autonomous unit and dealt with on that basis, but that Chinese suzerainty was recognised. Communist China had, however, determined to conquer Tibet.

The curtain of this interesting drama which *is still* being enacted before our eyes may be said to have gone up with the declaration of the Peking regime on 1st January 1950 that one of the basic tasks of the People's Liberation Army was the 'liberation' of Tibet. This was only two days after *India, whose attitude on the* matter was well-known to Peking, had accorded recognition to the Chinese Communists. Five days after the Peking declaration, our Prime Minister said he did not suppose that Peking wanted to or could deprive Tibet of her local autonomy. The Chinese Communists, having consolidated their position somewhat, announced in the beginning of August that they were about to invade Tibet. The Indian Government urged China not to use force and to settle the Tibetan problem peacefully.

The Chinese reply was that while Tibet was an integral part of China, they would not force the issue and were willing to negotiate a settlement with the Tibetans. A Tibetan Mission which was already in New Delhi started conversations with the Chinese Ambassador there and *these conversations continued till October.*

Around the 20th of October, probably sensing some indications of Chinese military activity in the direction of Tibet, the Indian Government once again pointed out to China its desire to see a peaceful solution of the Tibetan question, the possibility of unrest and disturbance on its own borders in case of military action, and the effect it might have on the chances of new China being admitted to the United Nations. The note had no deterrent effect on the Communists who, with their usual belief in the strong hand, marched forward into Tibet on October 25th. Immediately following on the invasion, the Indian Foreign Ministry sent another note. This expressed regret at the military action, called the invasion "deplorable," said it was "not in the interest of China and peace." India of course had received no previous intimation of the invasion.

Within a very few days came the Chinese reply to these Indian notes. Mao Tse-tung adopted the high tone of the ancient emperors, the Sons of Heaven, in dealing with the outer barbarians. Tibet was part of Chinese territory and the problem of Tibet an entirely domestic matter for China. "No foreign interference would be tolerated." The Communist army must enter Tibet "liberate the Tibetan people and defend the frontier of China." India's view of this matter was obviously "affected by foreign influences hostile to China."

The Indian Government on the very next day expressed "amazement" at this reply and "categorically repudiated" the notion that India was acting under any influence hostile to China. All India wanted was peaceful settlement between China and Tibet, "adjusting legitimate Tibetan claims to autonomy within the framework of Chinese suzerainty." India saw "no justification whatever" for the Chinese invasion of Tibet, which the Tibetans had in no way provoked. India had not embarked on "unwarranted interference in China's internal affairs" but had given advice as "a friendly government which had a natural interest in the solution of problems concerning her neighbours by peaceful methods." The Communists of course paid no heed. They went ahead with the invasion and the exchange of notes closed with the Chinese reply of the 16th November emphasising once again the liberation of the people of Tibet for the sake of world peace. The invasion was "an important measure to maintain Chinese independence and to prevent the imperialist aggressors from dragging the world toward war." Explaining the position in Parliament, the Prime Minister expressed puzzlement at the *talk of Tibetan liberation. To him it was not quite* clear from whom the Chinese were going to liberate Tibet.

The scene had, meanwhile shifted to the United Nations, where the Tibetan complaint to the Secretary General, cabled very shortly after the invasion, *was asked to be included on the* General Assembly's agenda a few days later. The day before this happened, Mr. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar had on behalf of India supported the Tibetan complaint and urged that China should not have used force but should have employed peaceful methods to settle the question. The real surprise came when the matter was taken up shortly afterwards by the General Assembly's Steering Committee. India's view was very different. It even urged that the Tibetan complaint should not be considered at all! The reasons for this complete change of front have not been disclosed. Friendly observers have attempted to find them in the desire to get on good terms with the Chinese in order to persuade them to come to a settlement in the Korean war, which the Government of India might at that time have felt would spread into a global conflagration. Be that as it may, the student of affairs is constrained to observe that the sudden *volte face*, which led a government that had so stoutly protested against the great injustice of the rape of Tibet, to acquiesce in it, can scarcely be regarded as praiseworthy. Events would seem to have shown that it was not even expedient.

During the recent debates on foreign policy in Parliament, the Prime Minister is reported to have said when the question of Tibet was raised that he had not protested at the time. If the report is correct, it is clear that his memory is very much at fault. Nor is that to be wondered at. It is but natural that so unpleasant a happening should be forgotten by those responsible. In that same debate, the Prime Minister exhibited complete nonchalance about Communist activities in Tibet. For this, there may be one of three reasons. His intelligence agencies may be ineffective. He may be refusing to believe his intelligence agencies. In all the circumstances, he may think it wisest to exhibit unconcern. In the best interests of the country, it is to be hoped that the third is the real reason for his attitude.

14-1-1954

CHOU REFLECTS

Strolling to and fro in the garden of the high-walled Embassy of Communist China, on the night of the first day of the Afro-Asian Conference, Chou En-lai, Prime Minister and head of the Communist Chinese delegation to the meeting, must have smiled to himself.

"Things are going well," he probably murmured. "Who would have thought before Geneva that we could have advanced to this? But we have, and it's primarily my doing, too. The friendly charm I exude, my modest speech and easy behaviour, my air of sweet reasonableness and understanding compromise, they have always brought in excellent dividends. From Marshall to U Nu, none I have chosen to work on has been able quite to escape me, and most have more than fulfilled my expectations from them. Some are watchful to begin with, they struggle and try to stand firm, but it does not take long before they begin to think that what I want is what they want, or is not very different from what they want. And then the game is mine."

"That was a nice touch," he would think, "sitting between *Nasser of Egypt and the Thai*. Both felt flattered, and of course it is very important to work on both. If they begin to think I am all right and mean no harm to them, a great blow will have been struck for the cause."

"And the cause, close to my heart always, is coming even closer, for soon, *it may be, the cause will be I* and I the cause. The obstacles fall fast. Kao Kang, chief comrade-in-arms of Chairman Mao, cast an enormous shadow, yet where is he now? Jao Shuh-Shih, the Party's Director of Organisation, what power was his! All scattered and gone. To Mao there remain but a few years. And he thinks well of me. He knows the steel *beneath the velvet* and has tried it again and again, always to good purpose. His word will be for me. There remains Liu Shao-Chi, formidable but a theoretician principally. And he is burdened with almost a bourgeois conscience. 'How to be a Good Communist,' *by the near-Confucian*, Liu Shao-Chi! No, this is not his age. He could not have taught a doubtful comrade a lesson by getting rid of his whole family while treating him to a feast. The future can only be with the deep ruthlessness and cool brains that are mine."

"So," Chou might say to himself, "let me *consider* Bandung, this gathering of the weak nations among whom *mine alone* is *truly* strong. I, *too*, could reasonably sneer with Stalin at the feebleness of all their moral principles and moral influence, the Panch Shila, non-aggression, mutual non-interference, respect for sovereignty, and territorial integrity. For my words can be backed by an army of four million, and an air-force of four thousand jet planes, and behind me stands the

Soviet with all its power and weapons, conventional and unconventional. But this is no time for the lion-like roar of the Sons of Heaven! With these Outer Barbarians, one must be moderate now. Later to them all the lesson will come. That Iraqui dared to blaspheme against our faith. He too will learn, when his country is in our grip. For the present 'tis enough to pay no attention. Call it irrelevant chatter, and turn people's minds away from it."

"What is important now," he would feel, "is to get as many as possible of these simpletons to think that we really have enough to do within our own country not to bother about them, that all we want is to be left alone, and that they have nothing to fear from us. Let them get into their minds the picture of this aroused Lion as a helpful St. Bernard. And let them think of those Americans as ravening wolves, anxious to go to war and to dominate. Once these images are established our task is half-done, for the only serious obstacle in the path of our ever-advancing Communist victory is the strength of the United States. The more that is handicapped by the ill-will of other nations the stronger we become. So that is my duty here, to still apprehension about any danger from the Communists, and to arouse apprehension about the danger to the whole world from the war-loving, hydrogen bomb-making Americans and their allies."

"Truly these Americans are pathetic creatures. Continuously they help our cause by their own foolish acts. In Korea, had they carried on the war instead of being led into the truce we wanted, they would have won decisively and we would have been set back years. In Indo-China, if only even a year before Dien Bien Phu they had insisted on the French freeing Vietnam, our Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh could not have got the advantage they did, nor we the prestige we won at Geneva. And still they do not *understand. They think to hold us by words. Basically,* they are unwilling beyond all reason to have any of their people killed. They do not realise that in a world of power-consciousness he who does not wish to have his enemy's will prevail must be prepared to pay for it with life, if necessary. Fifty thousand casualties they think of as enormous. To us Communists, for a worth while result, five hundred thousand are not too many, though we, too, naturally wish to preserve our people. And so, if they do not change their ways, and they will not, we shall inevitably win, taking over one by one every area for which they haver and hesitate, and argue and ultimately will not fight, from Matsu, Quemoy and *Formosa through South-East Asia to India and Ceylon.*"

"We have, of course, our 'Shock-brigades' already in these countries," he might muse, "the local Communist parties that work in accordance with our over-all Communist strategy. And we have equally, nay, even more useful allies in the fellow-travellers, often in high places, who always close their eyes to our faults, blazon forth our virtues at all times, and influence their Governments in our favour. How useful has that real pillar of the cause, Krishna Menon, not been! Over Korea and Indo-China, where would we have been without him? And even now how busily he is engaged in shaking American morale over Formosa, pushing in a wedge *between the British and the Americans,* getting Asian opinion on our side, working always and steadily on Nehru, whose whole world-picture he has skilfully altered to suit himself and us. Truly a remarkable man! His reward must be commensurate with his merit, unless by the time we can give rewards he becomes too tall."

"And Nehru," he might reflect "the vehement liberal, short-sighted and voluble, seems actually to put his faith in my words! He thinks he has but to proclaim a Monroe doctrine for Asia and Africa, and lo and behold it is enforced! He does not seem to realise that behind the Monroe doctrine of the Americans stood the sure strength of the British Fleet, ready to attack any Power that broke its terms. What strength is behind him? Who will compel obedience to his areas of neutrality? 'Tis not for me, of course, to object, he serves our common purpose well. His influence on Britain has done us immense service. And the volatile Americans too, his noble air distracts not a little. Him, above all others, I must keep on cultivating. And it's not difficult. He is so likeable, even in my iron mind there is sometimes a tremor against keeping on showing him wheat and selling him barley. But I have no time for mere human feelings. The Communist is always more than the man. Come, let me now rest. Tomorrow again the honest face, the benign eyes, the smiling charm!"

21-4-1955

HINDI CHINI BHAI BHAI?

Chou En-lai has been described by those who know him well as a charming individual, disengaging, unpretentious, quick-witted and with a good knowledge of English. Apologising to reporters in Delhi for not keeping his engagement with them for a press conference at 10 p.m., he said "Mr. Nehru and I have known each other for two years. We are already old friends. We felt happy in each other's company and continued to talk."

But surely it is not just because of this old friendship that Chou *has undertaken* this arduous journey. Even in a country so well-equipped with ruthless leaders as Communist China, the absence of a man of his calibre must be greatly felt. Only some very special purpose can have drawn him away *from his exceptional duties*. What that is, neither he nor his good friend and host have chosen to disclose. Both have contented themselves with generalities about ancient ties, modern cultures and the willingness of each to learn from the other.

Chou is not only the Prime Minister of China. He is also the third man in the hierarchy of the Communist Party that holds and rules China. Only Liu Shao-Chi stands between him and Mao Tse-tung and it is often said that Liu is too much of a theorist to succeed Mao. The leaders of this party have no doubt as to "the main thing." Their ideal remains the Leninist ideal of forwarding the international revolutionary movement. In Mikoyan's words this September at the 8th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in Peking "On this international essence of our cause," there is complete solidarity between the Soviet and Chinese parties. Chou is as much a Prince of International Communism as Bulganin, Khrushchev or Molotov. In a sense, perhaps, he is even *more devout than the first two, for the Chinese have* been much less ready to throw over that great apostle of the faith, Stalin. Chou then is here primarily as the emissary of International Communism.

Recent events have emphasised the grave need for such an emissary. De-stalinisation, Poland, Hungary have lowered considerably International Communism's stock. In country after country, Communist parties, the "shock brigades," according to Stalin, of International Communism, have sunk low in public esteem, and have even begun to lose some of their ardent members. Useful fellow-travellers, the keepers-together of the many

Front organisations with which the Communists dupe the general public, seem also to be getting scared and moving away. The real nature of International Communism as primarily a tyrannical, inhuman force, aiming at despotism within countries and domination over the world, would seem to be becoming apparent to ordinary people for the first time.

Even those disposed to take the best possible view of external Communist activities in all circumstances, those whose minds have never quite recovered from the illusion of the thirties about the Soviet State as progressive and the hope of the future are having qualms and acknowledging the facts. Mr. Nehru, who in the past has confined his criticism to the Indian Communist Party, and paid tribute to Stalin on his death as a "Man of Peace," said lately that the Communist regime of the Soviet Union is based on hatred and violence, that the effort to throw the blame for all the crimes of that regime on Stalin is misplaced, and that these crimes and misdeeds arise from the very nature of the system.

Is it surprising then that International Communism should seek special means to repair some of the damage done? Is it surprising that it should choose its emissary not from men, however highly placed, of the openly attacked Soviet party, but rather from the equally devoted, yet infinitely more disarming, because Asian, Chinese Party? Who better than the suave Chou in talk with his old friend to wash away the very dark stains on International Communism's face, leaving it to shine forth in its pristine glory to the sympathetically inclined observer's eye? Chinese problems, Chinese relationships with neighbours, may well serve as an introduction to the main purpose of keeping friends for the cause, making it appear not only unreprehensible, but even worthy of encouragement as truly peace-loving. The visit is welltimed from this point of view for Mr. Nehru flies in a few days to see President Eisenhower. International Communism is in effect calling in the Old World of China to redress the balance of the New.

Those of our citizens who, encouraged by our Foreign Ministry, line the streets to applaud the Chou En-lai processions, cheer vociferously the flow of platitudes at Chou meetings, and are greatly stimulated by the thoughts of the likenesses between Communist China and their own country, may find it not unprofitable to consider some dissimilarities.

Unlike China, we do not keep a defence force of over 4 million men and 4,000 planes. We do not obtain our equipment and arms free or on very easy terms from the Soviet Union. We do not have large numbers of Soviet *advisers in key appointments. We do not conquer weak* neighbouring countries like Tibet calling it "liberation." ("From whom? I do not know" said Mr. Nehru at that time). We do not publish maps including large areas of neighbouring countries, nor when asked about them say "They are reproductions of old maps and mean nothing," and then attempt to get hold of some of the areas shown in those maps by sending in troops. We do not use our nationals in other countries as a means of bringing them under our domination as Communist China tries to do in the countries of South-east Asia. We have no cause to which we wish to compel the citizens of other lands. We have not made a fine art of infiltration and subversion. Our people abroad are not instruments for upsetting properly-constituted governments. Our visitors to foreign lands are what they seem, not government servants carrying out orders and performing functions often very different from those they are supposed to have. We do not flood other countries with propaganda publications and books for sale below cost. We do not give instructions and material help to political parties in other countries to serve our own purposes.

Within the country, we do not have a dictatorship run by a small oligarchy. We do not have a legal system, which makes the will of the rulers the law. We do not ban open discussion of public affairs. Our newspapers are not organs of the Government repeating whatever the press bureau tells them. We do not let the executive will decide court cases. We do not try people by mass meetings nor compel confessions by refined torture. We do not execute large numbers of men by making them kneel and then shooting them through the head from behind to the accompaniment of the revelry of merrily-dancing crowds. We have not murdered (the Communist Chinese term is "deprived of existence") about 12 million citizens in six years.

We do not compel our people to obtain permission before buying railway tickets. We do not force them to join street committees so that their movements can be kept under watch. We do not 'brain-wash' our people, nor make them agree to think as we like. We do not insist on their confessing whatever the Government feels they ought to confess. We do not make our peasants yield their lands by force to so-called 'co-operatives', which take away most of their produce. We do not terrorise our people into compulsorily volunteering for any task Government desires to have done. We do not have concentration camps. We do not regard as absurd the enjoyment of individual freedom by the citizen, nor as fantastic the selection of our government by free choice of the people at stated intervals. We do not look upon tolerance as an unconscionable hindrance but rather as the greatest good. We do not take refuge in the 'double-speak' which means dictatorship when it says democracy, the Communist Party when it says the people, and tyranny when it says justice.

These variations are more numerous than any similarities. They also are so weighty in character as to render us in fact very different. The three most significant criteria that set apart Governments and peoples are ideas, ideals and behaviour. In all these, a great gulf yawns between Communist China and India. Not to understand and acknowledge this, but to shout meaningless slogans about a special brotherhood, is very distinctly to serve the Communist cause.

6-12-1956

10

TAKE GOA NOW

Deeply perplexed, I sat up until long after midnight. The world was too much with me. Goa, the Communists, Dulles, Pakistan, the Indian Government—my mind had been flitting back and forth among them. Saddened by the mess all round, I finally went to bed. When I woke next, I was in the back corridor of the basement of the Secretariat South Block in New Delhi, walking to the entrance of the lift that leads to the Home Ministry. The lift door opened and towards me strode at an even pace a sturdy, broad figure in a dhoti, with a warm woollen shawl around the shoulders. The domed head of this impressive man was bowed in thought, his rugged face immobile, his heavily-lidded eyes upon the ground. He was passing me before I recognised him. Then almost involuntarily I cried out "Sardar!" He looked up at me and gestured "Come." I followed him to the entrance and into his waiting car.

"Well," he said as the car started. "What do you think, Sardar," I asked eagerly, "what should we do?" "About what?" he questioned shortly. "Goa, Sardar, you know what's happening" said I, beginning to launch into a lengthy exposition. Raising his hand, he looked at me quizzically and said "I know and I'll tell you. Take Goa. Take it quickly, quietly. Take it firmly, competently. Stop hesitating about it. Root out this long-standing canker from the soil of India. Then treat the Goans well. They are a fine people. Let them run their small province in their own way as one of the States of India. Don't interfere with their customs or drink. Throw open every opportunity in this country to them so that they can rejoice at having found their way back at last to their own homeland. That's all."

"But," said I. "Sardar, the international repercussions? Don't you think. . . ." His raised eyebrows stopped me. "Were you born yesterday," he asked "or have you spent all your life grazing camels? *International repercussions*—bah! Some talk, perhaps. The Asian and African countries will be glad that you've had the guts to throw out the colonial Portuguese. Even Pakistan will find it difficult to make its indignation convincing. The Portuguese will naturally be upset, and they may find one or two European and South American nations to back their complaints. That needn't disturb you. They can always be offered compensation in cash for any property of theirs taken over or damaged, and if it is true, as they say, that they have to subsidise Goa heavily every year, they may soon find their wrath abating, as they think of the money saved. They are in any case scarcely likely to attempt to overturn by arms a *fait accompli*. If they do, you must of course teach them to beware, and you should be able to do so, considering how far they have to travel to reach you.

"The British, whatever their statements, will in their heart of hearts not be sorry that the problem has been settled, and they need no longer walk the tight rope between their oldest ally and their Commonwealth's brightest jewel. The Americans too will not be fundamentally disturbed. Some of them may be outraged, but basically they are too just a people not to see the inherent right of the reaction against colonialism. It isn't as if the Portuguese had even shown any readiness to listen to the advice of some of the best American newspapers that they should consider negotiations with us. No, the

Portuguese have asserted for years now that they are here and here they will stay for ever and ever. Well, obviously, if people take that line, something must happen. Besides, think of the great pleasure you will be giving some Americans by bestowing upon them the opportunity of lecturing you on your signal departure from the non-violent, soul-force standards you have been preaching to them and the rest of the world. Surely you do not want to be so unkind as to deprive Dulles of such a fine theme for discourse."

"No, but Sardar, seriously" I interjected "what about our moral influence if we do this? Haven't we built up our reputation for non-violence with considerable effort and aren't we greatly respected on account of it?" The Sardar burst into a short scornful laugh. "Really," he said, "you amaze me. Have people stopped using their minds? Or are the speeches you listen to so compellingly suggestive that even you begin to regard them as fact? Look at the actions of your own government. If it is non-violent, what has it been doing in Kashmir for years with thousands of soldiers? I would have settled the matter long ago with Pakistan, taking Jammu and giving Pakistan the valley, if the people of the valley in an honest plebiscite wanted it that way, as I think perhaps they would. If we had been non-violent, where would Hyderabad have been now and where Junagadh? They were ours, we had to have them for our safety and integrity, and we took them. Goa, too, is ours. For the same reasons we have to have it and we must take it.

"Don't I know all about these waverings? Wasn't I bothered to the limit with them over Hyderabad? No, no, we mustn't. What will the world say? What will Pakistan do? What about the effect on Britain? Mountbatten says he'll write to the Nizam himself again.

And so on and so forth for months, trying everything except the right method. And what would have been the position of the country today, if I'd let myself be shaken by all these irrelevant arguments? With an independent Hyderabad, still pointing a dagger at your heart, and a Junagadh as part of Pakistan making life *difficult for you on the West. And I suppose* you think every bit of the integration of the States was marked by perfect non-violence and sweet persuasion! And if that hadn't been accomplished, what would India have been?

"Do face up to reality. Other nations know the facts about you even better than you know yourself. All this talk of your great moral influence is just not to be taken seriously. Your lofty speeches are useful to some countries and they reciprocate by paying you compliments. *Sometimes it is payment for services rendered, sometimes* it is inducement in advance for services that it is hoped you will render. Sometimes it is just common politeness. There could not be a greater mistake than to take such compliments at their face value and allow most important policy decisions to depend upon the likelihood or otherwise of their being paid in future. However much the endeavour to cover up with words, the actions of wise nations are based on their true interests, and not on words. *If you, bemused with words, neglect your true interests,* nobody else is going to look after them for you. *So take Goa now.* The longer you wait, the more the chance of a situation developing in which Portugal, in combination with a nearby unfriendly power may make of Goa a most painful thorn in your side, affecting alike your financial stability and your strategic security."

His grave voice seemed to change gradually into the striking of a watchman's gong, and I found myself in my room in Bombay. Alas, that so short should have been the opportunity of learning from the penetrating insight and practical knowledge of this most mature statesman!

13-12-1955

INDIANS IN CEYLON

Of the lot of the Indian-descended labourer in Ceylon, what shall we say? He eats the bread of sadness and drinks the water of desolation. Hard at work from early morning to late evening on the estate, he has little to soften the total asperity of his life. He is no one's child; the hand of the Government of Ceylon is raised against him. Who then shall extend to him assistance? Who attempt to set out his woes? Let the employer and his agents treat him ever so unfairly, where shall he find redress? For him nothing remains but to despise alike his fortune and his employment, the Government of Ceylon and the Government of India. All alike have contributed to his misery or care nothing about it. God's curse upon them all!

He feels his present position the more acutely because of its worsening in recent years. Not always was it thus. Why in the years before Independence, the Government of India actually kept an Agent at Peradeniya, a high official of the I.C.S., whose duty it was to keep an eye on his condition, to listen to his complaints, to see that he got his rights, to keep within bounds, by appealing to His Majesty's Government in Ceylon, those who wished to oppress him and maliciously vex him. But Ceylon gained Independence. The Agent became merged in the High Commissioner. India rejoiced in the freedom of Ceylon and simultaneously relinquished its former care of a section of the new Ceylon's subjects. Its hope was that along with the other subjects of the new State, these too had become free citizens, and would with them enjoy the full rights of citizenship.

Vain hope, alas! For the new Government was certain that whatever else it did it would not admit these sons of Indians to citizenship. Let them go back to India! Ceylon had no room for them! And if they would not, let it be made clear to them every day that in Ceylon they had neither *place nor claim.* By the continued infliction of misery, their state would be rendered such that they would sooner or later change their minds and depart. Votes for them! Perish the thought! They were helots and helots they must remain.

When these intentions became clear beyond doubt, the Government of India suffered some twinges of conscience. After all, these men were the sons and grandsons of its own people, of men whom it had willingly permitted to go forth under indenture to earn their living in the neighbouring isle, at that time under the same rule. *They had been born in Ceylon, that was all the* difference. To Ceylon, they had brought much prosperity. Their labour had cleared and planted the lands that formed the great tea and rubber estates, the sale of whose produce brought such large sums to owner and government alike. Their labour continued to collect the produce and replenish and replant the soil. Was this then the reward free Ceylon was to give to such useful citizens? No, certainly not. Their ancestress, India, would interfere. She would advise, she would warn. Could it be doubted that beautiful and gentle Ceylon would listen?

Ceylon showed itself adamant and dissembling. In conferences, its Ministers made promises; in practice, they seldom kept them. Of the million Indian-descended, very few indeed have been brought on the voter's list.

Conditions were laid down difficult of fulfilment and even when they were fulfilled, reasons were found for raising fresh objections. The Government of India was outwitted and foiled. From insistent advice, it fell back on mere urging. Its strong pleas turned to tired argument. After all the matter lay between Ceylon and its subjects. How unfortunate that Ceylon would not recognise the proper position! Let it think again, surely it would, yes, surely. If it did not, of course the Government of India, would do, nay could do, nothing. But Ceylon was too sensible, too wise. It surely must reflect. So, pathetic beyond bearing, the platitudes of the Government of India, depressing deeply the unfortunate men affected, emboldening still further the arrogant Ceylon authorities. Mr. Nehru conferred with Mr. Senanayake. Result, nil. After much further correspondence, Mr. Nehru confers with Mr. Bandaranayake. Result, exactly the same, nil, as he sadly relates to Parliament.

Why is the Ceylon government so intransigent when the justice of the claim upon it is so clear? There are in Ceylon two principal races, the Sinhalese and the Tamil. The Sinhalese forms more than three-quarters of the population, but it feels uneasy at the thought of the Tamil, about one-eighth of the population. The Sinhalese is happy-go-lucky; the Tamil prudent. The Sinhalese loves few things less than work; the Tamil is proverbially industrious. The Sinhalese educates himself gently; the Tamil takes the fullest advantage of all educational facilities. The Tamil is at least as old an inhabitant of the island as the Sinhalese. He claims to be even older, maintaining that his ancestors occupied his present area of Jaffna and its neighbourhood over two thousand years ago.

Thus the Tamil, though his numbers are far smaller, occupies a place in the life of the country that makes *the Sinhalese nervous. Political power has just come to* him as the majority. He does not yet seem to have learned that an indigenous minority of long-standing is as much part of the country and as entitled to consideration as any majority, however large, and that the wise majority will recognise and cherish the minority. Hence he dreads all things that might increase the influence of the minority. The estate labourers are unfortunately Tamil. Were they to be regarded as full citizens, Tamil voting strength might be almost doubled. Accordingly, it just can't be done. Nay, the threat must be reduced by so treating them that in despair they may be induced to leave the country.

But if they do, who will work the estates? True in the past the *Sinhalese would never do this work, but* now their numbers have increased greatly, and unemployment is increasing amongst them. So why should they not do it? Naturally, their output will be lower, and they will take more holidays. But does that matter? It will all add to the number employed. So, away with the present labourer. The sooner the better. And *let us have no more talk of treating him fairly.* Hasn't he encumbered our land too long already?

Such then seems to be the reasoning behind the Ceylon government's policy. Very understandable, but hardly creditable. Is the policy likely to succeed? That depends almost entirely on the actions of those who consider it wrong, the Government of India, the Tamils of *Ceylon and estate-labour itself. The Government of* India must give up its inertia in this matter. Its anxiety to get the Ceylon Government to take the same line as itself in foreign policy seems to have caused it to look upon this important question somewhat lightly. It must now recognise the true seriousness of the matter. Whatever the legal position, it has a very distinct responsibility, and its failure to discharge it brings it the hatred and contempt of the poor and the miserable. Its ears would certainly burn with shame if it heard the sarcastic comments that fall from their desparing lips. No imagined successes in foreign policy can make up for the suffering its failure here causes.

Let it then say firmly to the Ceylon Government, "There has been enough hesitation and withdrawing. Please be done with all these procedural prolongations. These people, you know very well, were born in Ceylon and are Ceylon citizens. Stop demanding their grandfathers' and fathers' birth certificates. Many of your Ministers themselves could not produce such documents. The time for excuses has passed. We urge you most fervently to redress this grievance. Otherwise, the consequences to you may well be grave, though we will take no overt action."

At the same time, the Government of Madras, the Tamil province, must begin to take special interest in the question. It is nearest the scene and it is but fitting that comfort in large measure should flow from it to those who but for change of birth place, might have been its own people. With the Government of India too it must stress its special position. It cannot sit quiet and let the Government of India continue to handle this matter with the indifference it has shown in the past.

Surprising indeed is it that the well-organised Tamils of Ceylon have allowed this question in which their interest coincides with common justice to fall into the political background. They should obviously make it the first point in their programme, letting the Government understand that not only is the obtaining of full citizenship rights for these people regarded as vital by them, but that neither co-operation nor support can be expected from them unless it is conceded. Both within and outside Parliament, the hardships and disadvantages undeservingly inflicted upon this valuable section of the people should be their constant theme. A special fund for the purpose of educating the people on this issue and for organising and assisting the estate labourer might also prove very useful.

The condition of the sufferers does not give much ground for expecting direct action by them, though of course final despair might drive a good many of them to it. Continuous negotiation by India is perhaps the most important factor in creating the state of mind that prevents direct action being undertaken. Nothing of course would be more effective in convincing the Government of Ceylon of the necessity of changing its policy than efficient protest action by the aggrieved minority, and if the Government of India, even after the warning suggested above, can obtain no results, it might well make clear its helplessness to the men concerned and tell them that their future lies in their own hands. Once this stage is reached, if the Ceylon Tamils and the estate labourers combine in determined effort, there can be little doubt that the desired result will be speedily obtained.

19-12-1957

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

The general restraint observed in India in commenting on the long and unfortunate sequence of events that culminated in the dismissal by the Governor-General of Pakistan of a Prime Minister, still undefeated in the legislature and unwilling to leave office, is a measure of the very considerable goodwill for the sister-country that has survived the chequered course of Indo-Pakistan relations over the last six years.

Far from feeling any gratification at the embarrassment of a not too friendly neighbour, thinking men grew ever sadder as from 1951 onwards news came through of grave happenings. They tried to reassure themselves. Pakistan, they argued, was not just a South American or Middle East country that must sooner or later fall prey to disorders ending in a military dictatorship. After all many of the men in it who counted, men holding responsible positions, had been fellow-workers with them in office and council and field, educated in the same manner, brought up in the same traditions. They could surely be relied upon to maintain constitutional government and the minimum degree of stability.

When, therefore, they heard of the formation of a new Government, said to be broader-based, firmer, pledged to destroy disorder, be progressive and deal speedily and effectively with emergent problems, they were pleased and wished it well, whatever their doubts about the constitutional nicety of the Governor-General's action and their sympathy with the dismissed Prime Minister, whose high standards, regard for duty, and unfailing courtesy had caused him to be respected by the large numbers that had come to know him when he held high office in pre-partition India.

From recent indications, it appears that relations between the countries may now enter a new phase. After much struggle and hostility, the realization appears to be dawning upon both Governments that they cannot do without each other, that their permanent interests are so mixed together that they must inevitably suffer in the absence of mutual friendliness and co-operation. This would seem to be quite as true in the defence and international spheres as in those of external trade and border law and order. The folly of altering by political action the flow of trade between two neighbouring countries, more especially with economies complementary in so many respects, is by now too clear to need much stress.

There have been few more disheartening spectacles for the intelligent observer than that of the two countries putting themselves to serious disadvantage, each to cause loss to the other. A modicum of good sense would have shown the futility of many of the commercial transactions with distant lands when nearer supplies were available in the country next door, or of both countries increasing, to their ultimate detriment, the production of a raw material, the combined existing supply of which would well have sufficed for their joint needs.

Again, from the military point of view, the modern and well-trained defence forces of India and Pakistan form in fact the only sufficiently effective accumulation of real strength that there is between Israel and Malaya. Working in friendly co-operation, it might be able to give pause even to the powerful forces that seem to be daily becoming stronger, both in the South-east and the North-west. Events march fast nowadays and distances are greatly narrowed. It may well be that, if the two countries do not stand together in defence, each may find itself destroyed separately. Nor does defence in the present context cover only armed action. The nature of the opponent makes the taking of security measures and the exchange of information about infiltration and propaganda activities equally important. Today, each neighbouring country can be, and probably is, in the absence of mutual understanding, a base for use against the other. Nationality forms no obstacle.

Communist "shock brigades," whether Pakistani or Indian, carry out their orders in their own or other lands. Their range is not limited by geographical boundaries. Nations today have been compelled to regard the existence on their borders of stable, democratically governed, properly administered states as one of their best safeguards. The weakness or instability of a neighbour can no longer be considered a source of strength, except by the illadvised and the rash.

In the light of the advantages to be derived from friendly relations, the misunderstandings about outstanding questions between the two countries seem comparatively minor and there is little reason to suppose that, with goodwill on both sides, suitable solutions will elude well-intentioned negotiators.

The proper implementation of the recent assurances by the new Prime Minister of Pakistan about equal treatment for the minorities, especially in East Bengal, will certainly be very helpful in maintaining the right atmosphere. The most reasonable solution for the gravest of the problems, Kashmir, would seem to be partition, giving Jammu and Ladakh to one side, the western and northern areas now held by Pakistan to the other, combined with the holding of a quick plebiscite under the impartial view of a sufficient body of U.N. observers in the valley itself, so that the people of the valley could once and for all decide with whom they wished to cast their lot.

There is nothing in the nature of the problem about compensation for evacuee property to prevent settlement. Assessment of the values of the evacuee properties in each country having been made, the Government concerned would have to be responsible to the other Government for the payment of the difference in value, suitably extended instalments being given if necessary to meet the exigencies of its financial position. The *dispute over canal waters is already before an international* body and could be submitted to arbitration, if both parties failed to reach an agreement despite its mediation.

The really important point at the present time is that both should be determined to settle their quarrels. As a great administrator-philosopher has said: "I too can *decide a law suit* with the best of them, but surely the right course is to see that no cause for law suits arises." That should be the spirit. The excesses of nationalism have no place in the modern world. Between neighbours, reason must prevail.

16-5-1953

KASHMIR

Kashmir is in the news again. The Soviet guests of the Indian Government, Bulganin and Khrushchev, are to visit it. They have specially extended their stay in India in order to be able to do this. And the Pakistan government is very angry with India about Kashmir. In Karachi, it has been holding an All-Party Kashmir Conference. Representatives of the major political parties, and prominent citizens from all over the country and from Azad Kashmir, the portion of Kashmir occupied by Pakistan, have been gathered together to condemn the behaviour of the Government of India.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan in a speech, an abbreviated version of which occupies about six columns of an Indian paper, recounted to the conference the misdeeds of the Indian Government regarding Kashmir and emphasised its continuous refusal to do anything to settle the dispute. He ended up with an assurance to the people of Kashmir that Pakistan was behind them in their struggle for self-determination and would not fail them. "Everything we hold dear, our faith, our honour, our lives, are dedicated to the fulfilment of this pledge."

It is difficult to say with certainty why the Kashmir visit has at this stage been added to the itinerary of the Soviet chiefs. Very probably it is at their special request. Their adherents will no doubt wish us to believe that the fame of Kashmir has attracted them. Perhaps they have in their spare moments been reading *Lalla Rookh* and have been fired by the poet's description of "its roses, the brightest that earth ever gave" of and "its valleys, its mountains, its many-voiced fountains."

Perhaps, however, their motives are more mundane. Perhaps they wish to see with their own eyes the area of India nearest their empire, to learn personally the details of the many tensions to which it is subject, to strengthen by their presence the Communists within, who already hold a powerful position in its political life. Proper assessment of men and problems in this critical area is undoubtedly important to them, and they are clearly not men who fail to recognise what is important. In any case, their visit is brief and will not, we may hope, be too harmful.

The same can, of course, not be thought about the prolonged Indo-Pakistan impasse over Kashmir. This has now lasted seven years and has done immense harm to both countries. Mr. Mahomed Ali's speech presents a partisan view but assesses the magnitude of the damage not inadequately. It would have been, of course, much more effective, if he had recognised the faults of Pakistan in this business as willingly as he has recounted those of India. The sending-in of tribesmen through Pakistan territory into Kashmir to attack and loot, the disguising of Pakistan troops as volunteers to fight the Indian Army, the acceptance of the accession of Junagadh to Pakistan, the insistence on talking about Junagadh and Hyderabad as if there was any lack of justification for the Indian action in regard to them—grave errors, one and all, which ought to be recognised as such by the Pakistan leaders, and the admission of which would not in any way weaken their real case against the Indian Government.

Mr. Mahomed Ali was once an official, and an official in those days was trained to take into account all the facts. Now, however, he is a politician and perhaps considers it legitimate for a politician to select the facts that suit him. Otherwise he might begin to be a statesman and see both sides of a question, which, of course, would never do, for the speeches statesmen make hardly ever receive the applause those of politicians arouse. Crowds are not moved to unreasoning emotion by them, nor to parading the streets shouting for war, as we are told they did following Mr. Mahomed Ali's speech.

From which it must not be concluded that on the Indian side the Kashmir question has been dealt with by statesmen. Here, too, politicians have been in charge, and have treated the matter in the manner of politicians. The only point that can be urged in their favour, perhaps, is that they were never officials but always politicians, so that from them it would be expecting too much to hope for any conduct other than a politician's.

The student of affairs must hold that many of the points Mr. Mahomed Ali made are valid. The politicians in India have been opposed to a plebiscite, the politicians in India have jailed Abdulla, the politicians in India have accepted the verdict of a Constituent Assembly the validity of which is very doubtful indeed. An Indian army is kept in Kashmir, and it is difficult to believe that the maintenance of the present government there is not in large measure due to it.

Briefly, there have been faults and mistakes on both sides. But the question cannot be settled by dwelling on them. It can only be settled, and decently cordial relations established between the two countries, if the leaders of both stop behaving like politicians and become statesmen. The Indian side will then realise that no purpose is served by holding on to the Kashmir valley if the bulk of the inhabitants wish not to be with India, and that whether they wish to or not can only be known after a proper, honest plebiscite; the Pakistani, that to insist on an over-all plebiscite with the object of forcing in Jammu which is over 75% Hindu, is just to make any settlement impossible. Both will understand that a settlement is essential, that it must be so designed that it will endure, and that it can only do so on the basis of partition, the Western territories Pakistan holds to Pakistan, Jammu and Ladakh to India, and the valley to whomsoever its inhabitants wish to go to according to their own free choice. Both sides will endeavour to get the plebiscite over as quickly as possible, without making difficult demands about changes in government or population, being prepared to take whatever verdict the present people with the present government give, provided of course, the balloting is honest and watched by impartial observers.

Talk of war, of refusing to ascertain the will of the people of the valley, of rejecting partition on the basis suggested, will then appear to both reprehensible in the highest degree, and both will make every effort to get their people to see the situation in its real perspective. *The politician,* said *Ben Jonson, is the devil's quilted* anvil which he uses for his worst work. Oh for the metamorphosis of the politician into the statesman!

4-12-1955

11

NO QUALIFICATIONS FOR NEUTRALITY

Nations, like individuals, have their salient characteristics. Learn political sense from the British, logic and eloquence from the French, gaiety and easy living from the Italians, but turn to the Swiss, above all else, if you wish to know the real nature and conditions of neutrality. Switzerland is the only modern nation that has had a long tradition of neutrality, and all its policy for over a hundred years has been designed to preserve this neutral position. The belligerents in two world wars, powerful countries on its frontiers, have respected this neutrality.

How has this neutral status of Switzerland been maintained? By a combination of its own exertions and its usefulness as a neutral to all belligerents. The hardy Swiss have always been willing to offer tough resistance to all aggressors. Switzerland has compulsory military service for all male citizens, and maintains for its size a most efficient modern defence force. Its geographical situation also makes it difficult to attack. High mountains protect some of its frontiers. It has moreover served as a listening-post and a strong-room to the principal belligerents in the past, so that they have been persuaded that, on the whole, it was more to their interest to leave it undisturbed than to raise the hornet's nest of the Swiss by attack, doing at the same time damage to themselves by destroying the one safe place against future contingencies in Europe.

The Swiss, for their part, have spared no pains to remain truly neutral. The Swiss Government studiously refrains from expressing any views on international problems. Because the Charter of the United Nations provides for collective action against an aggressor, Switzerland, unlike Sweden, another neutral country, has even chosen to remain outside the United Nations. The Swiss have shown themselves ready to help when called upon to do so by all parties, but they have made it quite clear that they prefer the silence and self-restraint which safeguard and are appropriate to the position they have adopted in international affairs to the playing of a part on the world stage.

These then would seem to be some of the conditions for real neutrality: toughness; favourable geographical situation; inherent usefulness in that status to the contending parties; a willing eagerness to abstain from expressing opinions about, or taking any part in, world affairs; and a readiness, so to speak, to be in the world but not of it.

The aim of the foreign policy of the Government of India is often stated to be neutrality. This country, it is urged, must also stand aloof from alignments, not coming down on any side, watching all sides with lofty detachment. How many of the essential conditions does India fulfil? The whole of Switzerland could form part of one of the larger Indian provinces. The problem of the defence of India is obviously an infinitely greater and more onerous task. Yet in India there is neither compulsory military service, nor a defence force of sufficient strength and power to meet present and threatening dangers. Attacked by a really strong Power, armed with modern weapons, even conventional, all India's forces could do would be to hold up the enemy for a while until assistance came, and if it did not come, however brave and skilful the defence, the end would, barring miracles, be disastrous. A long coast-line open to attack, frontiers on the East and West with no natural barriers, and on the North, with a natural barrier, perhaps one of the best in the world, turned by the conquest of Tibet, bringing for the first time in history a nation with a modern army of four million men as India's northern neighbour—these factors disclose from the point of view of defence a definitely unfavourable geographical position.

Of the likely belligerents in any world conflict, further, neither side, let alone both, would be advantaged by India's remaining neutral. India could be neither a sounding-board nor a strong room. The endeavour of both would be to bring it into the conflict on their side, for each would seek to profit from India's enormous man-power and large natural resources.

Nor indeed has there been the least sign of any eagerness on the part of India's rulers to remain on the sidelines in the discussion of world problems, matters of deep interest to the Great Powers. On the contrary, from the moment of independent existence, India has sought to play an ever-increasing part on the world stage. Its spokesmen are always anxious to give vent to their views on almost every point, quite often even on points of no direct concern to their country. Its foreign policy chief, moreover, speaks to other nations not unoften in terms of moral adjuration.

Not only then is India determined to take a prominent position in world affairs, but its Government seems also to have made up its mind to attempt to guide other nations in the reaching of decisions. In these circumstances no question arises of following the studied self-restraint of the Swiss, or their self-abstention to the point of refusing to be members of the United Nations. Clearly then, from every point of view India does not qualify to be really neutral. The aspirations in that direction its Government spokesmen express from time to time are made vain by the very nature of the country's position and by *their own* conduct.

Not, of course, that even if it were otherwise, and India was willing to follow the Swiss pattern, would one of the parties in the world conflict today, the Communists, be prepared to admit its neutrality. For the Communists there is no such thing as neutrality. Those who are not with them are against them. "There is no third side, and *neutrality is a façade*," says one of their great leaders. Even the truly neutral Swiss have not been able to escape their reproaches and attacks. Some time ago, in most unprecedented fashion, the foreign Minister of Switzerland was compelled unequivocally to compare Communist parties in lands other than those governed by Communists, to enclaves within a nation. He reproached Swiss Communists not for failing to share the opinions of the immense majority of the Swiss people, but for having in fact ceased to be independent Swiss citizens to become blind instruments of foreign propaganda and political power.

2-9-1954

PREACH WHAT YOU PRACTISE

Fear, hatred, suspicion, courage, love, peace: reference to these has become almost inevitable whenever Mr. Nehru makes a speech. If only the hearts of men were not afraid, *if only they harboured not hatred, and suspicion*, if only men could steel themselves to be brave, and rise to love one another! Why, conflict would disappear and peace would be certain. Thus Mr. Nehru in different contexts, and with occasional variations over and over and over again. We in India have no established Church service nor any fixed day on which to listen to a sermon, so that it is perhaps good that there should be preaching from on high quite often.

Mr. Nehru's sermons of this type, however, are aimed not so much at the audience to which he is speaking, but at wider ones outside the country, especially at those engaged on the problems of international relations. Whether addressing a meeting at Trivandrum or at Chepauk, it is the governments of the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union to whom Mr. Nehru is talking. More often than not, he is implying that the first two should clear their minds of fear and suspicion of the third, should move forward with courage to accept its statements at face value, should endeavour to replace their strong dislike for its totalitarian behaviour and aggressive doings with at the least a mild affection.

Unfortunately for Mr. Nehru, this country too, despite the high-mindedness of those in charge of its affairs, is not free from international enmities and disputes. It is strongly embroiled with Portugal, and it would be no injustice to its Government to say that in the minds of that body of men there is strong suspicion and fear of Pakistan. The attitude of the Government of India towards both these opponents is tense, watchful, anxious to thwart. Pakistan whom it holds to be most aggressive, it stands determined and ready to resist. Through the speeches of its spokesmen all over the country, it endeavours not merely to maintain that its case in its quarrel with Pakistan is correct, but also continuously to stress the danger from Pakistan and the necessity to be on guard against it. The atmosphere thus created is certainly that of suspicion and fear.

Now, it may be justifiable to be suspicious of Pakistan's intentions, afraid of its irresponsibility, and always prepared to act against it. That is another question. But is it *justifiable for* Mr. Nehru, full of suspicion and fear himself in this particular matter, to preach the desirability of giving up fear and suspicion to others, who may well feel that they face dangers far greater than he does? Is there much point in his going on to make out that they are almost morally reprehensible for not shedding fear and suspicion, when he himself harbours *them assiduously?* Mr. Nehru has *probably* heard of the old proverb, "Physician, heal thyself" and perhaps, like the physician to whom it was first applied, he will urge that he does not suffer from the disease at all or that his is a very special and peculiar type of disease, that is not really a disease but an unknown form of health. Perhaps, in an odd moment of candour, he may even argue that in speaking as he does, he is in reality only a signpost, and as such expected to point out the direction that should be travelled, not to travel it himself.

In either case his answer is scarcely likely to be taken seriously by any save those anxious to accept whatever he says as gospel. The gentleman practises what he preaches, and then preaches according to his practice. If his practice is otherwise, he refrains from preaching. That is the least he can do. By not following this simple rule not only does Mr. Nehru convict himself of insincerity, but he seriously harms the people of India by creating and settling in their minds a completely false image of world conditions today. His ministrations cause them not to realise where their danger lies, or how much they are adding to it by weakening, through their disapproval and remonstrances, the very strength on which their safety depends.

So influenced by this general attitude are our people that some of those opposed to Mr. Nehru's views in other fields, eagerly accept his views in this and even go beyond them. The most notable example is that of Mr. Rajagopalachari, who recently has been full of congratulations to the Soviet Union for stating, after conducting a prolonged series of most violent and radio activity increasing tests, that it will hereafter not hold further tests if the other nations possessing nuclear weapons refrain. Formerly, Mr. Rajagopalachari devoted considerable effort to urging the United States and Britain to promise unilaterally not to use hydrogen and atomic bombs at all in any circumstances. For, said he, if they did that the Soviet Union would be so moved that it in turn would promise similarly and a new era of peace and goodwill would dawn on earth.

To him it mattered very little that with the advantage in conventional weapons so strongly on the Soviet side, undertaking to abandon the use of the bomb by the other powers meant in effect putting the world entirely at the mercy of the Soviet Union. Presumably, against all experience, he thought the giant would not use its giant's strength tyrannically, and he felt deeply aggrieved that this idealistic estimate of his was not accepted by the powers that would pass into slavery because of it. Now again, unwilling to leave it to the citizens of Britain and the United States themselves, he presses strongly their Governments to refrain from further tests. It does not seem to occur to him that while the advice is his, the risk is very much theirs.

Mr. Rajagopalachari's reaction towards local suspicion and fear in India is far from being as definite. He has not been heard, for instance, following the analogy of his advice to the United States and Britain, to urge the Government of India to withdraw its troops from the Kashmir border, putting full reliance on the goodwill that would be created in Pakistan by such action. He has not been heard to press strongly that abandoning suspicion and fear of Pakistan primarily, and other nations in general, this country should reduce sharply, or even give up completely, its military expenditure. Is courage in this matter the concern only of others? Are not we to display it and take the consequences?

Here again is an example of that double thinking that calls upon others to undergo sacrifices and undertake feats, which it never seems to hold suitable for itself. The age-old formula "For you, that; but for me,—" is the one in which such minds find complete satisfaction. The pity is that though they see this, it does not strike them as utterly unconscionable. On the contrary they are inclined to regard their behaviour as indicating special grace and deep-seated virtue.

1-5-1958

MILITARY PACTS

Nothing irritates the thinking citizen of a small country like Turkey or Iran more than Mr. Nehru's blanket condemnation of pacts and alliances. "Bad, all bad," cries Mr. Nehru, "just increasing tension! Get rid of them. Sign Panch Shila declarations instead. All will be well." The Turk or Iranian, listening to this repeated again and again in different words at great length, is bewildered. He can't make up his mind whether to take it seriously or regard it as one of the sanctimonious fripperies with which even acknowledged statesmen cover up their real thoughts.

If he is to take it seriously, he must conclude that Mr. Nehru's view of world forces and conditions is very different from his. If it is just 'double-speak,' he thinks it is very dangerous. In his view, it encourages the main aggressive party, providing it with ready-made excuses. It has also probably a most deleterious effect on the public opinion of one of the biggest countries in the world, a fellow Asian whose understanding and sympathy are of consequence to him. Further it affects governmental opinion in other Asian countries culturally and historically connected with India and leads to an unnecessary division of non-Communist Asian opinion which he considers both harmful and dangerous.

He is no propagandist. His point of view is simple. If Mr. Nehru does not wish to join any pacts or alliances, he has no objection. He does not even desire to persuade him to join the pacts with which he is concerned. Let Mr. Nehru remain quite uncommitted. That is his business. Only let him refrain from continuously attacking arrangements which Turks and Iranians consider essential for the safety of their countries.

Our thinking citizen is both knowledgeable and understanding. He has read Mr. Nehru's and Mahatma Gandhi's works. He has taken the trouble to acquaint himself with the trend of Congress thought on non-violence and international affairs through the years before it came to power. He notes that even the Mahatma was not opposed to the use of force in certain circumstances and agreed to the sending of troops to fight in Kashmir.

He sees that India maintains a defence force, small for its size but efficient and well equipped, that its government is quite prepared to use force whenever it considers it necessary, as in taking over Hyderabad or in maintaining internal order. He remembers that before coming to power the Congress protested year after year against tyranny and the actions of tyrannies and stood always for freedom, individual and national. He finds that since coming into power, the Indian Government has often expressed strong opposition to colonialism and has asserted *the right* of all peoples to govern themselves.

Why then, he wonders, does Mr. Nehru oppose the pacts into which his country has entered, these in his judgment being the only means by which it can retain its independence. Can it be that Mr. Nehru is not sufficiently informed about the situation of his country and *the danger it faces?* Does the Indian Foreign Office serve its chief so inadequately?

If he were asked, he would explain his position thus. The Turk would say "Mine is a small country, mainly agricultural. For centuries, Russia has coveted our territory. *We stand between it and the Mediterranean.* Once it took us over, it could expand along the shores of that inland sea. In the past, the European balance of power saved us, for it suited neither England nor Germany that we should pass into Russian hands. For the first few years *after Lenin came to power* it seemed as if a new era had dawned, for he genuinely appeared to want to live at peace with us. But even before his death, Soviet policy had reverted to the former Russian pattern and with a new intensity derived from the Communist consciousness *of Moscow, as the seat of the new* world power, the third Rome that would extinguish all rivals.

"Our own internal strength, fostered by Kamal's policies, and the balance of power in Europe kept us free till the Second World War. After that war, there were *only two great powers left in the world, the U.S.A. and* the Soviet. The U.S.A. was busy demobilising and the Soviet busy riveting its hold on country after country in the Balkans. Our position was becoming extremely precarious. Fortunately, after Czechoslovakia was taken over, *the U.S. finally awoke to the danger and formed* NATO. For us, who had been striving hard to bring home our danger and, because of our danger, the peril to the Mediterranean, this was a godsend.

"We joined NATO, thankful that at last we had some security, that an attack on us would bring in strong forces on our side and that consequently the Soviets would think several times before attacking us. Were we wrong? We, who live in the Bear's open mouth, should we not have used proper means to prevent it from closing down upon us?

"Mr. Nehru objects to NATO. He would perhaps have bade us rely upon a treaty of non-aggression and non-intervention with the Soviet, the Panch Shila in fact. Forgive me if I smile. We know the Soviets; you don't. The whole idea of relying upon any mere agreement in dealing with them seems to us, with due respect, ridiculous. To trust to the Panch Shila would be to have ourselves conveyed to them, bound hand and foot. Haven't they shown what they are capable of in a thousand places? Aren't you seeing it today in Hungary? As a friend I wish your trust in Panch Shila agreements with the Communists, the U.S.S.R. and China, may be justified. Frankly, I am very doubtful, now that Tibet is in Communist hands and the Chinese immigrants are pouring into it and into Burma. However, let the future look after its own. You are safe for the present, at least, largely because of American strength. The U.S. can't let the balance of power be disturbed by your being brought into subjection to the Communists, and the Communists know they would have to fight if they tried any real overt aggression. All I would urge is even if you don't accept this, stop attacking the alliances which give us security and confidence. Our independence and life depends upon them."

The Iranian would explain similarly. He too is a close neighbour of the Russian Communists, and has good cause to know what the fate of his country would be, if it stood alone, relying on Panch Shila. Mr. Nehru, he would urge, is taking far too much for granted. The real nature and intentions of the Communists are clear to see from their acts, yet the Indian Government refuses to admit it sees them. Well, that is a matter for it. Let it even, in the words of Sheikh Saadi, 'Do evil to the good, by doing good to the evil.' But let it not do evil directly to the good. Let its chief refrain at least from attacks on the alliances and understandings that alone make continued independence possible for Iran.

To the student of affairs, these pleas seem unanswerable. Beyond statements about trust begetting trust and fear destroying confidence, no justification for the Panch Shila as an effective political instrument has appeared, or is perhaps at all possible. Even if India chooses to rely upon it, there would seem to be little reason for denouncing those who are doubtful about its merits, and seeing their very existence in danger, enter into alliances with like-minded peoples.

13-12-1956

AN APPRAISAL

Ten years after independence, foreign policy remains a close preserve of the Government of India, or rather of the External Affairs Ministry. Parliament is edified from time to time by the speeches of the Prime Minister and other External Affairs Ministers. The public reads these in the newspapers. Both Parliament and the public, neither particularly interested, mildly approve. And so, till another time. Briefly, the Indian people in general do not yet seem to be awake to the importance of foreign policy. This suits the External Affairs Ministry so well that it strongly resents any attempt to disturb the habitual accord. "What? Disagree on foreign policy? When our relations with other nations are concerned? Impossible. Every one must support the Government." Krishna Menon's phrase for criticism at home of foreign policy when he was defending some of its manifestations abroad was "a stab in the back." It would not be incorrect to infer from the External Affairs Ministry's general attitude that in its view the best Indian is he who holds to the formula "My country, always right"; the next best, the believer in the saying, "My country, right or wrong"; and the worst, the reasoning citizen who sees sense in the sentiment, "My country, right, or if wrong, to be persuaded to be right."

Those in power and many of their very vocal supporters are also apt to frown severely on reference in discussion to persons connected with foreign affairs, their opinions, characteristics and the views other people take of them. Yet, from the very nature of foreign policy, such reference cannot be avoided. For "the personal reputation of a diplomat (or Foreign Minister) is closely bound up with his official duties and constitutes his principal asset as a negotiator." So says Lord Strang, former Permanent Under-Secretary of the British Foreign Office, in a recent book. He adds: "Diplomacy is a profession in which trained intelligence and native wit must obviously count for much. But unless the diplomat has also an unassailable integrity of mind—which constitutes both honesty and moral courage, since it usually requires moral courage to be honest—it will avail him little to possess the purely intellectual gifts in large measure." How then is one to discuss foreign policy without considering in the light of these criteria those who make it? Personalities are probably more important in foreign policy in India than in almost any other country. Those who know have little doubt that its architects are two and only two, the Prime Minister and the present Defence Minister, or as some are inclined to think, altering the order, the present Defence Minister and the Prime Minister.

The basic tents of India's foreign policy are stated to be non-alignment and the five principles of the *Panch Shila*. India, it is said, does not side with power *blocs*. It judges matters only on merits and makes up its mind after due deliberation in each case. Who then can disapprove of Indian foreign policy? Those who urge this are guilty of the common fallacy of equating the thing said with the thing done. In reality, foreign policy consists in deeds and not in declarations. Deeds may well have very little correspondence to the general declarations supposed to cover them. The essence of any policy is its implementation, and in implementation Indian foreign policy often appears in guises very different from the Indian Government's declarations about it.

Compare, for instance, the Government of India's actions regarding Hungary with those regarding Suez or Algeria. Soviet behaviour in Hungary was at least as deplorable as that of France in Algeria and more so than that of Britain and France in Suez. The Government of India has had no hesitation in censuring, and rightly, at the U. N. France for Algeria and Britain and France for Suez. But it has never been able to bring itself to record a vote condemning the Soviet Union for its barbarous suppression of national freedom in Hungary. The farthest it has gone is to allow itself mild verbal reprobation, and that too after public opinion throughout the country, moved for once to real emotion, strongly criticised its lukewarm attitude.

Delhi has been, and again rightly, a great champion of anti-colonialism and has spoken strongly for the cause both at home and abroad. Its wrath in this matter has however, been directed entirely against the old colonial Powers, the nations of the West. About Communist colonialism that, since the war, has brought under its sway over a hundred million people, it has seemed completely unaware. Not only has it not censured this tremendous deprivation of liberty and reduction to vassalage of former free nations, but it has on occasion encouraged the colonial Power by maintaining that the puppet regimes set up by the Soviet Union in these unfortunate countries are really independent.

The tremendous receptions the Government of India arranged for the Communist leaders, Khrushchev and Bulganin, throughout their tour in this country, are still fresh in people's minds. The treatment it accorded to them went far beyond that called for by the dictates of friendly behaviour. It betokened a deep cordiality, justifiably creating the impression of at least a union of hearts, if not a union of policies. It seemed, in fact, to carry further the sentiment for the Soviet Union that made the Prime Minister on the death of Stalin, the savagest of dictators according to the testimony of his own follower Khrushchev, adjourn Parliament and eulogize him as a Man of Peace.

The leaders of the Soviet Union, Stalin and his successors, have never made any secret of the fact that their object is to dominate the world and that they propose to move towards it, using, among other means, what Stalin called his 'Shock Brigades,' the Communist Parties in lands not yet under Communist sway. Never, however, has the Government of India shown the least awareness of this tremendous menace. Khrushchev may threaten to bury all non-Communist systems and declare that, so far as fighting for Communism goes, all Communists are Stalins. But to the Government of India he seems to remain a very dear and trusted friend. Its animus is directed not against him, but against the organizations aimed at preventing his success, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

These few instances are enough to show the very special interpretation the External Affairs Ministry puts upon its declared policy of non-alignment. They bring out the tendencies to minimize the errors and crimes of the Communist regimes and to neglect completely the very real threat from them that run as constant threads through the whole pattern of Indian foreign affairs thinking.

Mr. Nehru, describing the purpose of foreign policy, has said, "We may talk about national goodwill and mean what we say. We may talk about peace and freedom and earnestly mean what we say, but in the ultimate analysis a Government functions for the good of the country it governs and no Government dares do anything which in the short or long run is to the disadvantage of that country." The purpose of foreign policy, then, is to serve the national interest. To the extent that the interest is served, it is successful; to the extent that it is not, it has failed. National interest is not just a vague generality. In regard to specific problems it becomes a concrete reality. The test of the foreign policy followed by the Government of India, accordingly, is whether in the problems that are of importance to it, this concrete reality has been achieved.

The national interest of India demands that Goa should have become part of India. But Portugal holds on and the probability of Goa's union with India has receded rather than advanced with the passage of years. Indian national interest requires that the Ceylonese Government should treat equitaby as Ceylonese citizens residents of Indian descent. The position in this respect again appears worse today than at any time since independence. Indian national interest would have been well served by the maintenance of Tibet as an independent State or, at least, as an autonomous State under nominal suzerainty. Tibet, about the invasion of which by the Chinese Communists the Prime Minister protested vehemently ("they say they are liberating it. I do not know from whom "), is now governed tightly by the Communists as an ordinary province of China and Chinese immigrants are pouring into it. Very much is it in India's national interest that India should be respected and liked in Nepal and have greater influence there than any other foreign Power. From all accounts the exact contrary is true, Indian influence having almost disappeared, while Communist China's prestige grows at an ever-increasing pace. Friendly relations with Pakistan, India's neighbour on both east and west, are very important in the Indian national interest. But Pakistan today is a bitter enemy and the attempt to cope with it drains India of resources that could be far more profitably used otherwise.

Perhaps the most important of Indian national interests within the country is economic development, and the obtaining of that capital for it from abroad which would enable it to be accomplished without the regimentation and tyranny that would turn India into a totalitarian State. The principal source from which that capital could be obtained is the United States, a democratic country sufficiently friendly to have given India, in the form of gifts and loans, over a billion dollars in the last ten years. Public opinion in the United States, however, has been so alienated by the Indian Government's pseudo non-alignment, by the hostile and insulting attitude through several years of the head of the Indian delegation to the United Nations, Krishna Menon, and by the reputation he has acquired of being a strong Soviet and Communist partisan, that the Government of the United States, however great its anxiety to assist democratic India, finds it very difficult to go to the U.S. legislature with a proposal for aid.

The Indian national interest necessitates particularly cordial relations with Britain, India's largest customer and market and originator of the Commonwealth and of our common ideas of national liberty, individual freedom, and the rule of law. Yet for reasons similar to those that have alienated the people of the U.S.A., a profound feeling of indifference and coldness towards us prevails among the ordinary people in that country.

Few circumstances would serve the Indian national interest better than a reduction in that attractive power of the Indian Communists for the average citizen, which brings great danger in every sphere of activity, and may, if continued and strengthened, result in the disappearance of democratic life. Today, the Communists have come to power in one State, and have had their influence increased in several other States and at the Centre, an important factor in bringing about these successes being the excessive cordiality shown by the makers of Indian foreign policy to international Communism and its leaders. If the Communist Chiefs, Stalin and Khrushchev, Mao and Chou, are the wonderful people the Indian Government makes them out to be, there cannot be much wrong with their disciples, Gopalan and Nambudiripad, Dange and Ghose, who besides have the advantage of being Indians, argue many simple citizens.

A strictly correct relationship with the Communist regimes giving them no opportunities for entrance into Indian life, neither inimical nor friendly, was the proper approach in the national interest. Instead, the Government of India has not only thrust respectability on the

Communists abroad and at home, but has given them ample opportunity to acquire influence and even to control important aspects of the national life. Infiltration, too, has become a common feature, to the great detriment of the country.

All these instances demonstrate that, far from having benefited the nation, the foreign policy of the Government has done it grave harm. Had implementation lived up to declaration, this could in large measure have been avoided. Honest non-alignment, the free world, (certainly very important to this country, it, too, being free) even the nations against whom it might work on occasion, would have understood and respected. But present policy injures greatly both our reputation and our welfare.

23-12-1957

FIFTY YEARS HENCE !

(*An extract from "The Story of Our Times" by Shri Jawarharlal Itihasik; first published in 2010 A.D.*)

Now that the degrading Communist tyranny has at last been destroyed and the sufferings of a half century of slavery are left behind, it is fitting that some of those who have survived the tribulations of this terrible period should take advantage of the newly-restored, blessed boon of free speech to endeavour to describe the origin and progress of the plague that so ravaged this ancient and holy land.

Not only is it fitting; it is also essential. The fortunate young of this and later times, who have their nurture and birth under the bright sun of freedom, must not be deprived of the opportunity to falsify that lesson of history that man learns nothing from history except that man learns nothing from history. May they and their children prove wiser in their generations than did our ill-fated ancestors in the latter fifties and early sixties of the last century, who, having for the first time in a thousand years regained the freedom of their country, permitted it to be filched away from them within less than fifteen years, becoming the ready victims of plausible and cunning men whom they themselves permitted and assisted to rise to power and strength.

I, now past the Psalmist's count of three score and ten, was just twenty in the fair spring of 1957. The atmosphere of the time was spacious. Life tasted sweet, the future favourable beyond compare, both for the country and myself. Our progress seemed inevitable. Nothing I felt could stand in our way. We had a glorious and experienced leader whom the whole world respected. All we had to do was to follow him. He knew and would lead us aright.

I had been interested in public affairs since I was 15. The election results of 1957 somewhat disturbed me. The Communists came to power in Kerala. Their strength in Bengal and Bombay was increased. But it seemed to me nothing to bother about. I was sure the Central Government under our foresighted leader would know what to do. Little did I realise that the elections I had witnessed that February and March would be the last free elections in India for half a century, that though thereafter we would be regularly going through the motions of voting every fifth year, it would be mere mockery, just a matter of form. The candidates would be chosen and we, under orders, would record our votes unanimously in their favour.

On casting back my mind, it is clear that the seeds of this epoch of disgrace and misery were sown on the 17th of April 1957. That was the fateful day and 12 o'clock the fatal hour from which the tragedy of the future stemmed. For at that moment was sworn in as Minister of Defence in the Indian Government the gaunt, hating, Machiavellian, histrionic Krishna Menon.

People thought well of him then. Indeed no pains had been spared by his great friend, the Prime Minister, to create on their minds a tremendous impression of his ability, skill and willingness to sacrifice. Yet even then some thinking men were uneasy about him. He seemed to be far too friendly with the Communist powers; in the language of the times, his reputation was that of a devoted fellow-traveller. The result of his efforts in the diplomatic field, the sphere to which his endeavours upto then had been directed by the Prime Minister, appeared to have been very largely to antagonise our friends in the non-Communist world.

In the Cabinet-making period, reports had been current that even the Prime Minister was beginning to feel apprehensive about his diplomatic efforts, and that therefore, to him would be allotted some Ministry whose duties would keep him away from that field. The innocuous Ministry of Law had been mentioned. Then suddenly there came this stroke. The Defence forces of India, Army, Navy, Air, serving and reserve, factories, installations, equipment, all were to come under his control and obey his orders. He was also to continue to participate in the making and exposition of foreign policy.

I remember myself feeling slightly perturbed. To one of my father's friends, a prominent pillar of the State, I indicated this hesitation. His answer was 'Don't be silly. Granted he has the reputation of being an ardent fellow-traveller, after all he can't act alone. There are the service chiefs and other high-ranking officers to consider and our officers have definitely been trained in the non-political tradition.' I was comforted and soon forgot all about it. It was spring, wonderful in the hills, and my thoughts turned to far pleasanter things.

Nearly twenty years later, when I was an inmate of the "Reform-for-your-own-good" camp to which I had been sent for not being sufficiently respectful in my lectures on Soviet History to the great Stalin—once attacked bitterly and degraded by Khrushchev and the other chiefs of the Soviet Union but later again given rank among the greatest of the Communists—a fellow-inmate was an old man who had been a Colonel on the Army Chief's staff in the early years of Krishna Menon's regime.

He used to suffer from terrible nightmares during which he would moan and rave. I, though tired beyond bearing with the day's hard labour, could not refrain sometimes from crawling to his side and trying to calm him. Gradually he began to have confidence in me and *though long conversations between prisoners* were forbidden, we managed to exchange many thoughts.

Once repining over our lot, I told him what my father's friend had said. 'Poor simpleton' said he 'He *overrated the character and capacity* of the leaders of our fighting men and underrated the skill and ability of those who broke them down from the top. What folly it was,' he said, his face growing red and his whole body trembling with anger, 'to put at the head of the Defence Forces that man! Did they not know that these were the final practical sanction behind all government, that the unity and the integrity of the country in any crisis depended on their support to the Government, and that once they or even a considerable portion of them altered direction, the Government would have to follow or go?' The officers by training were certainly non-political

But there are other inducements besides politics. He who can promote or disgrace, make or break, pick out of the rut or throw into the crowd, will never lack ready instruments among ambitious men.

And Krishna Menon was no fool. None of the tricks were unknown to him. From the first day, I, being close, could watch, and I saw how skilfully he moved towards the objective. Soon, all along the line at crucial spots were his men and their influence was continuously increasing. In the early days there were some protests but his replies were skilful and the Prime Minister was always there to throw his cloak over him, so that they soon ceased.'

I remember that once or twice even questions had been asked in Parliament. But sharp answers were given and the matter dropped. Meanwhile our relations with the Soviet Union and Communist China grew closer and closer. We began to obtain military equipment from them. The visits of their experts to us and our experts to them attained a new intensity, as did the exchange of information and messages between their foreign ministries and ours.

I remember too how a cousin of mine, a Police Officer in the Intelligence Bureau, had been extremely depressed one day, and on my continuous urging had said: "There is no use in keeping a watch on Communist activities any longer. The highest quarters just pay no attention. On the contrary they seem sometimes to be angry that any reports are submitted."

The Civil Ministries appeared very cowed. In the key posts there too, suitable replacements seemed to take place somehow. The relationship between the Communist Party and the Defence-Foreign Affairs wing of Government improved continuously. Often they seemed closer to it than some of its own proper party men. Broad-casting, a Government monopoly, gave a monotonous recitation of the Sino-Soviet point of view, while the Press, under the combined effect of threats and inducements, gave up all attempt at independence.

So things dragged on for a while. I with my new job in the Education Ministry and recent marriage was too happy and occupied to note all the details. Yet I could not help sensing an uneasiness in the air. In early '61, came the Prime Minister's illness and during the time when he was absent from work for about a month, the position became clear.

All the cards it seemed were in Krishna Menon's hands. The Pants, Morarjis, Krishnamacharies, Azads, leading members of the Cabinet who, knowing him for what he was, had not dared to oppose either his admission *to the Cabinet or his appointment to the Ministry of* Defence, concluded once again quickly that discretion was the better part of valour and sought safety in cooperation. (It did not serve their turn long, for after '62 none of them appeared in the Cabinet, and even before that they had become mere figureheads).

The transfer of power was firmly established. Thereafter the Prime Minister returned to position and dignity. Power however remained in the hands of those that had grasped it. They decided everything as they chose and both at the Centre and in the States the Communist pattern began to be more and more apparent.

The so-called elections of 1962 saw a complete Communist-cum-fellow-traveller set put up. Strong opposition in some States was dealt with ruthlessly. Thereafter the content of freedom, already reduced, disappeared quickly from all Governmental and legal institutions. Lenin's vision had been fulfilled and the cup of our misery was full . . . .

25-4-1957

AGREEMENTS WITH SATELLITES

Does Mr. Nehru as he signs statement upon statement, each similar to the other, with the Prime Ministers of the Communist satellite states, ever pause to ask himself what the likelihood of a ripe old age for him would have been, had he lived in any of the territories in which his co-signatories kneel to the Soviet Chiefs on the necks of their own countrymen? If he ever does, he may recollect the saying, "Had Karl Marx lived under Stalin, he would not have lived long." Nor indeed would that bitter condemner of inhumanity and injustice have fared better under the more plausible and outwardly amiable Khrushchev. The New Class, the Communist élite, could not but have given very short shrift to so powerful a champion of the classless society.

It must be clear to Mr. Nehru that, with his love of freedom and unwillingness to be oppressed, his own condition would not have been different. Nor, perhaps, if he let his mind wander along this path, would he have totally forgotten Marx's view of Russian ambition: "The policy of Russia is changeless. Its methods, its tactics, its manœuvres may change, but the pole star of its policy—world domination—is a fixed star."

The value of a signature depends upon the character of the signer. What general view can be taken of the Prime Ministers of the Satellite States? By and large, they are the tools of the Soviet Union. Through them it does its worst work. Were a really free election possible hardly any of them would be in power.

What sense then does it make to sign with such men joint declarations on international affairs? How does it benefit the Indian people? How does it benefit even Mr. Nehru? For the Prime Ministers, of course, it is highly advantageous. It strengthens their hold upon their despairing people. They can say to them, "Here you are. The heir to Gandhi, the great believer in right means, that widely acknowledged moral leader, Nehru, has not the least doubt or reservation about our right to rule you. You may feel what you like about our cruelty and injustice —of course, you daren't say anything—but he enters into declarations with us on equal terms, and such declarations, couched in the most ethical language, telling everybody else what to do. So you see, the world is with us. Fall to heel and no more repining."

It also helps them to please their masters of the Soviet Union, for each one of these declarations is a further tangible acceptance of the Soviet pretence that these satellite countries are indeed independent; and not, as in fact, Soviet colonies. Under Soviet orders, or at the least, with Soviet concurrence, the Prime Ministers leave their countries, and yet,—hey, presto, the transformation —through these declarations Mr. Nehru takes them himself to be, and presents them to his countrymen, as legitimate rulers of properly free and self-governing countries.

That Mr. Nehru knows the actual position just as well as any one else can be taken for granted. If he ever had any doubt at all, the brutal suppression in Hungary last year must have removed it completely. Why then this mystification of others, perhaps even this creation of an illusion for oneself?

It is the manifestation in a way of the strength of Mr. Nehru's imagination, of his strong capacity for make-believe. He has but to make up his mind and in the midst of the dryest desert, he sees so vividly green fields and bubbling fountains that he finds no difficulty in convincing many of his followers that they see them too. Thrice at least in the last ten years, this capacity has led him to hold that the food problem was solved. Recently, it has caused him to declare that the late

Finance Minister was not factually responsible for the LIC investments. Evidence is as nothing to him, when it comes in the way of the onward sweep of this make-believe.

What motivates this make-believe? What causes it to begin to operate? Principally, predilection. To a lesser extent, prejudice. Mr. Nehru is animated by an extreme sensitivity of feeling about his likes. As with most decent people, dislikes do not matter to him in quite the same way.

There can be little doubt of his affection for the Soviet Union. It obviously was more than a figure of speech when he said while bidding farewell on his last visit, that he was leaving a piece of his heart behind. The Soviet Union was to him, as to many intellectuals in the thirties, the hope of the future, the haven of refuge for the exploited, the New Land, and the illusion has continued despite ample opportunity to see facts as they are, and despite occasionally seeing them quite clearly and even letting them register on the mind. Hence, the tremendous willingness to give the benefit of the doubt on every occasion to the Soviet Union, even, sometimes when there is no room for doubt at all, to suspend judgment rather than to have to condemn. Hence the wish to make things easy for the Soviet Union, the readiness to accept almost any excuses, and the anger at those who stress its misdeeds so cogently that excuses become very difficult. Hence, the desire to look at problems, like the true status of the satellites, from the Soviet point of view, the reluctance to believe anything truly damaging to the Soviets, and the great partiality for men like Krishna Menon, whose enthusiasm for the Soviet Union and its creed are very well-known to be deep-rooted.

Were Mr. Nehru a private individual, this capacity for make-believe could be dismissed as on the whole an agreeable trait, lending colour to the drabness of life. But Mr. Nehru is Prime Minister, and however fascinating a Prime Minister's make-believe, the interests of his country demand that it be strictly subject to the limitations of fact. Wrong decision, unwise policy, blindness to danger are otherwise inevitable. The more charismatic the personality of such an imaginative Prime Minister, the greater the risk to the country, because of his ability to carry many of the people with him by the exercise of the arts of allure, and his unwillingness, due to his respect for his own overweening power and wisdom, to heed valid criticism.

13-3-1958

12

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

A spate of observations about foreign aid has burst upon us in recent months. Messrs. Dulles, Stassen and Allen have been trying to convince the U.S. Congress that differences on points of foreign policy are no reason for refusing aid to a genuinely democratic country attempting to give its people a better deal through democratic methods.

Mr. J. J. Singh has been recommending that the U.S. Congress should not vote the aid because, among other things, he feels that aid does not seem to create the goodwill towards the aiding country which it has a right to expect. Mr. Allen while supporting U.S. aid to India is believed to agree with Mr. Nehru that the quantum of aid should not be large, as in that case the aid-receiving nation becomes over-dependent on the aid-giver. The amount of aid proposed by the American Administration this year for this country comes roughly to Rs. 45 crores, about one-tenth of the Central budget estimates.

On this question of aid, as on most human matters, a variety of views can be plausibly maintained. But, as in most matters, there is one view which is nearer the right than the others. The Singh thesis says in effect: "America gives aid in order to be liked and to evoke gratefulness. If, having given aid, it is still not liked and nobody is grateful, what is the point of continuing it? Let it be stopped."

The American Administration regards the aid as serving not only the interests of India but also those of its own country. Whatever its differences with the Government of India, because India is truly democratic it sees in an economically-sound India a powerful obstacle to the advance of the Communists. It is aware of the strong Communist efforts to bring India within the Communist orbit, and it knows that failure to advance in economic matters and the grave discontent following from that would assist the Communists greatly. It is apt therefore to regard the aid as expenditure well worth while since it may help to prevent a catastrophe.

It naturally does not want the expenditure to be too high: accordingly its welcome of the Nehru view which seems to be a combination of three strands of thought. "It is difficult for an aided nation not to get entangled in the world policies of the aiding nation; so the best thing would be not to take aid at all. But, in Indian circumstances, economic development without aid is going to be extremely difficult and economic development we must have. Therefore let the aid be small, and then the risk of entanglement will be small. Thus we can both have aid and remain fully independent."

All these points of view are of course understandable and a great deal may be said in favour of all of them. Yet, taking the world picture as a whole, there is little doubt that they are unduly restricted, if not altogether wrong. Just as the thinking visitor from abroad is appalled at the terrible inequalities, the enormous riches and the intense poverty that face him in India, so the citizen of the world is appalled at the tremendous differences between the ordinary standard of living of the inhabitants of the developed and the underdeveloped countries. Just as the reduction of glaring inequalities seems to the intelligent foreign visitor one of the principal tasks of the Government and the ruling classes of this country, so the raising of the standard of living of the poorer countries to at least a bare minimum seems to the citizen of the world the paramount responsibility of the more developed countries.

Looked at from this point of view, no question of gratefulness and liking, of risk and insurance, of independence and being entangled, can arise. However legitimate, they are but minor. The basic things are the alleviation and prevention of hunger, poverty, misery, disease. It is the duty of those who have to assist to the highest extent of their capacity in the fulfilment of these purposes; and it is the duty of those who have not, to accept the assistance and put forward their full strength and co-operation to see that it produces the maximum results. The world is so much one today that many of its best minds have had little difficulty in realizing that in this lies the real welfare not only of the have-nots but also of the haves, and that the co-existence of some very rich nations and some extremely poor ones is bound in the long run to be a source of the gravest danger to both. Whatever, then, the validity of the restrictive, minor reasons, aid from the richest country in the world to one of the poorest ought to be based not on calculations of the irreducible minimum, but keeping in mind the real needs and the ultimate goal. Keeping these in mind too, the receiving nation ought to have no hesitation in accepting the aid and using it to the fullest advantage.

The principal inhibiting factor in the economic development of this country is undoubtedly capital. Labour is plentiful, and, with teaching, can become as skilled as necessary. Of technical ability there is a store to which additions can be made with a fair degree of rapidity. Natural resources, though perhaps not as plentiful as some optimists like to believe, are also not absent. But the great catalyst, capital, is sadly lacking. Nor can it in large measure come except from abroad. Reliance on internal savings or taxes to produce anything like the amounts necessary to meet real needs is bound to prove illusory.

The Finance Minister, recently stated that he *would be happy if the new National Plan Loan,* for which special appeals had been made by the Prime Minister, would produce Rs. 100 crores, that is, about Rs. 28 crores more than the Rs. 72 crores that had been previously programmed for borrowing during the current year. Now Rs. 28 crores is quite a tidy sum. But an addition to resources of this magnitude, even if continued year after year, can scarcely touch the fringe of the problem we face in economic development. It was the acute realization of this state of affairs which made the U.N. Committee of 1951 suggest the voluntary transfer of about *7 billion dollars a year, 2 per cent of the annual* national incomes of the developed countries of the world, to the underdeveloped countries. The amount, as the Report points out, is not unconscionably high, since larger portions of the national income have been transferred abroad annually for some years by more than one developed country within this half-century.

Of the problems aid raises, none is more frustrating than the exacerbation of feeling on both sides to which it often gives rise. Its success depends upon a high degree of civilized behaviour by all concerned. Then it truly blesses both the nation that gives and the nation that takes, falling like the gentle rain from heaven upon the earth beneath.

15-6-1954

AID AND THE PLAN

Does India need foreign aid in the form of loans and grants for the Second Five-Year Plan? Yes. How much does it need? 800, or more probably, a 1,000 crore of rupees. Is this amount a negligible quantity in the total context? No. It is 16.6 to 20.8 per cent of the proposed expenditure in the public sector. Is it merely peripheral? No. It is basic. Without the foreign exchange it represents some of the important projects contemplated are likely to be seriously affected.

In the light of these facts, the attitude adopted by the Government's spokesmen towards this matter seems somewhat strange. Some of them keep on asserting that large foreign aid is bad and must be avoided, since inevitably the tendency for countries receiving such aid is to subordinate their policies to the policy of the country giving the aid. If, of course, they hold this view seriously, the plan they put forward and discuss in detail should not contemplate and take into account foreign aid on this scale. But it does. Probably, then, they are not serious about their assertions. And indeed several instances, especially that of Yugoslavia, show that there is no inherent connection between receipt of aid and subordination of policy.

Other Government speakers just slide over the issue. They know that the aid is essential, that without it the plan is not likely to succeed. But they neither will say so, nor make any effort to get the aid. They keep on hoping that somehow it may come. The experts advising Government take a similar line, though perhaps for them there is greater excuse. The planners assume this amount on the resources side: well, it is up to them; why question their view, seems to be their feeling. It is about time this generally equivocal attitude was abandoned and the

Indian Government clearly said that aid of this magnitude was not only necessary but was also wanted, and would be willingly and appreciatively received on conditions, similar to those applied to aid in the past, which meant no derogation from India's sovereign authority.

In the present state of the world, even loans of the amount needed would seem to be beyond the capacity of any country except the United States. The bulk of the foreign aid, if it is to come at all, can only come from this source. *But the recent actions of the Government* of India, especially the communique issued at the end of the Khrushchev-Bulganin tour, and the later defence by the Prime Minister of the statements made by these two Communist leaders during their tour, have alienated American public opinion and probably, the American Government.

Even such a great admirer and staunch supporter of the Prime Minister as Joseph C. Harsch, well known political commentator, was deeply hurt and felt constrained to protest, more in sorrow than in anger, against the Prime Minister joining with such people in the issue of such a communique. Less friendly critics have had no hesitation in proclaiming that it has now been made quite clear that the Indian Government is on the Communist side and that, therefore, to give it aid would merely *be to strengthen the Communist cause. If then aid is* considered essential by India and its obtaining desired, this latter view must be combated. The worst way to do it is to state that while India will be friendly with all nations, its contacts will be closer with those who are warmly friendly to it (the Soviet Union and China) than with those who are not.

On the whole, indeed, the deep exasperation of the Americans is quite understandable. Since 1950, the United States has made gifts to India of 291 million dollars and has loaned to it 230 million dollars. During the same period all the Soviet Union has done is to give 700,000 dollars, and enter into a contract to build a steel mill on commercial terms. The United States is a democracy like India. The Soviet Union is a tyranny. The United States is also, like India, non-Communist.

The basic interests of India do not clash in any way with those of the United States. Nor does the United States present any threat or danger to India. And yet Indian governmental policy not only does not support the United States, but does not even appear neutral between it and the Communist powers, and seems to be leaning more and more towards the latter. The sympathetic observer may well be inclined to agree that in all the circumstances, the correct view is that adopted by those Americans who feel that the best thing to do about India is to do nothing.

One such writer sums it up thus: "Why not do nothing about India? By 'nothing' I mean, more precisely, 'nothing special,' nothing beyond what the actual situation calls for as an obvious sensible minimum. That is: open recognition that India is for the time being grazing on the other side of the fence; maintenance of correct but cold diplomatic relations; no Government relations beyond the diplomatic minimum—no 'aid,' military, technical, economic or any other, no gifts, handouts, loans or favours. . . ."

Yet the citizen of the world, interested in the welfare not only of India and the United States, but also of mankind, and in the preservation of those values that make life 'well' for all who think at all, cannot but enter a caveat. For this is not a question merely between the United States and India. The issue here is the whole battle between tyranny and freedom. The handling of this matter may well affect the future of freedom itself.

India is the primary example of an under-developed country planning by persuasion. To its North, is the great Communist giant, China, planning by regimentation. The eyes of all South-east Asia, nay of the whole world *from Egypt to Indonesia*, are fixed upon these two examples of planning.

If India fails, as well it might without this essential aid, who can doubt that for these countries the question will be settled once and for all. *Planning by regimentation*, the Communist method and dogma, the very antithesis of democracy, will seem the only hope of the poor. Not only India, but most of the other countries of this region will then not be able to resist the gravitational pull of the Soviet faith. The success of planning by persuasion in India, will, on the other hand, mean the *success of democracy, of civil liberties*, of political and religious freedom throughout the area. After all, this is what the United States wants. Not only is it good in itself but it puts an automatic ban on the further Asian expansion of the Communist *world*.

A deeper wisdom than flits about on the surface of diplomatic and journalistic activity is necessary to recognise this. Yet, once recognised, it is with difficulty, and rarely, disputed. Basically, however much and deservedly the Indian Government may have got itself disliked, assistance to make its plan succeed is the taking of precaution by the United States against, at the least, a Communist South-East Asia. And what would be the magnitude of the expenditure it would be only too willing to incur if once that catastrophe occurred?

The word blackmail sometimes comes easily to indignant lips in connection with such circumstances. But if there is any element of blackmail in them at all, it is not blackmail by volition. It is rather inherent in the situation. Logically, the right path gets pointed out. Let those who will not take it, whatever the reason, beware. They fail to take it at their own peril.

17-1-1956

U.S. AID FOR INDIA?

"Why after all, 'should' there be any intrinsic harmony between the interests and ideals of the American people on the one hand and the peoples of India on the other?" asks an article in the Summer Number of this year's *Yale Review*.

"Why 'should' they aspire to recreate themselves in the image of our particular traditions? . . . Flushed with a patronising benevolence toward people less prosperous and advantaged than ourselves, we seem unable to comprehend that they dislike us, not for our failing to be what we pretend to be, but for our being what we are. We are white, we are rich, we are (temporarily) dominant. Why should the coloured, the impoverished, the weak, look on us with anything but resentment, envy, censoriousness?"

At a time when the Government of India is endeavouring to obtain a loan of about 700 million dollars, this article has special significance. It articulates emphatically the views of a school of thought opposed to aid to underdeveloped countries, a school that seems to be gaining some ground in the United States. The Indian negotiators would do well to pay particular attention to it and to lose no opportunity of meeting the arguments on which it relies. The article holds that even if extensive aid were given and development took place as hoped, 'resentment, envy, censoriousness' would remain, because continuous economic progress in the West would tend to widen the gap between the underdeveloped countries and the West, and equality would not be nearer but further away. Why then throw away money on aid? The appeal of Communism to underdeveloped nations again *is not so much belief that* it will increase the likelihood of the raising of living standards but this agitated yearning for an equality of status. "To them Communism is no 'brave new world' as Western utopians have seen it but a practical expedient whereby poor nations can ruthlessly mobilise their resources (and above all their manpower) so as to attain near equality in effective military power and consequently, in *world esteem.*"

Does the Indian resent the American because he is white? Quite emphatically, no. He may condemn some Americans for their treatment of the black, for falling away from the obvious implications of their own high declaration about the equality of man, but the colour of the American skin does not otherwise affect his judgment or feeling. Does he resent Americans because they are rich? No, certainly not. Accustomed to live in a society in which only a very few are rich and most are very poor, the Indian does not envy riches. He may wish he were not so poor, but the riches of others evoke in him no strong antagonistic feeling. He does not think to be poor or rich is either a sin or a virtue. He is not ashamed of being either, though occasionally he may consider it wrong for the rich not to help the poor or for the poor not to strive to better himself. Does he resent the United States for being powerful militarily? Again, no. He is quite conscious that his is a weak nation from the power point of view and must in the very nature of things continue to be weak. He may sometimes be disappointed at some of the ways in which he thinks the United States uses its military power e.g. in building up Pakistan military strength, but he is not envious because it is strong. So many other nations are militarily superior that he just does not think in terms of general competition. If his country can manage to keep up the position it inherited in regard to its nearest neighbour with whom, unfortunately, relations have not been satisfactory, he is content.

In the matter of the ends and means of government, the ideals of both the countries are the same. India is as much an inheritor of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of respect for the individual, of freedom of the judiciary, of equality before the law, of liberty of expression, worship and thought, of civil liberty, of free democratic elections and popular representative government as the United States. No question arises of India's recreating itself in the image of particular American traditions. The Indian State has the same traditions, and their observance is strengthened by the qualities of tolerance and free, wide-ranging thought that have been Indian characteristics from the dawn of history. There is thus a very real harmony between the ideals of the United States and India.

The true interests of both also coincide to a remarkable degree, though there are undoubtedly differences of opinion between the governments as to how they should be furthered. Whatever a few prominent people in India and perhaps some Americans may have wished, the differences have not been such as to seriously embitter either side. American government spokesmen have recognised that non-alignment is not unfriendliness and that viewpoints on political matters cannot necessarily coincide, and Indian government spokesmen have, in spite of the reportedly increasing arms aid to Pakistan, not hesitated to refer to the United States as that great friendly nation. Despite the aberrations of Communists and of their very few partisans in high places, clearly India as a whole and the Indian Government as such *neither resent nor envy the United States. They are* saddened, when occasionally it is involved, as great powers sometimes are apt to be, in incidents which do not seem to accord with its ideals and high traditions. Even then *it is much less dislike of the United States than sorrow*, in the words of the article, for 'our failing to be what we pretend to be.' It is thus clear that so far as India is concerned, there is no validity in the argument of the first paragraph.

The Indian Constitution has declared the Welfare State, broadly speaking, to be the goal of the Indian Government's and people's effort. It would surprise propagandists of the ideas of the *Yale Review article* to learn that in the opinion of most Indians the Welfare State would be very nearly attained if all the Indian people could get sufficient food (2,500 to 3,000 calories a day), *sufficient clothing (about 18 yards a year), reasonable* housing, and education upto the primary standard, with arrangements for the more intelligent to go upto secondary schools and Universities. If,. in addition, employment was *available except for a small minimum*, and medical facilities of a moderate standard were spread throughout the country, satisfaction would be almost complete. Nor would the fact that meanwhile in the United States, *every labourer worked for only 40 hours* and owned a Cadillac, several television sets and a country villa, cause an upsurge of jealousy or produce revulsion of feeling. Once their 'utter lack of things needful for the *body' is made up, the hearts of the Indians generally* are not likely 'to be cast down and quail for grief' because people in another land enjoy the plenty of their 'candied carrot' civilisation.

The Indian has always known that possession and happiness are not synonymous nor does the second depend on bringing a great store of things under the dominion of the first. The necessities for a human, rational existence having been obtained, it is not for him to pine after luxuries. If they come his way, he will use them. If they do not, he will not be obsessed by them. Detachment, after all, has been for centuries the goal of his philosophy. The West need not then be afraid that if, by its aid, (a small percentage only in any case of what India itself is spending) it enables the simple aims mentioned earlier to be fulfilled, the money will be just wasted, because the resentment and envy—which as has been shown, do not today exist—continue in spite of the improved standard of living.

According to the article, world-esteem is a consequence of 'near equality in effective military-power.' The only two countries the world esteems then must be the United States and the Soviet Republic. All the other countries in the world are far below these two in military power. Still the world does esteem some of them. Even small countries, weak and militarily powerless, have by virtue of the qualities of their people, earned respect. Within the United Nations moreover, all countries have equality of status in the General Assembly, and even small countries do not hesitate to express their views freely and firmly. What then is this much to be condemned 'yearning for equality of status' from which the article states India, among others, suffers? And when does it think the yearning will be satisfied? When 'by ruthlessly mobilising its resources, and above all its manpower' it has exploded its own hydrogen bombs! Or not even then? Perhaps it must go on to have its own Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile, before this status is gained! !

The appeal Communism has in India is exactly because of the feeling that the Communists may give a better deal to the people by providing quicker the basic essentials the people need and thus bringing about the desired rise in the standard of living. All the more the reason then, if the United States considers the countering of the Communists to be in its own interests, for it to be willing, nay eager, to give to the fully democratic government of the country the reasonable aid it asks and requires for the fulfilment of its truly humane and peaceful objectives.

19-9-1957

WRONG EMPHASIS ON PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

Few of the ailments from which American foreign policy suffers is more harmful to the true interests of the United States than the practice of the heads of Government agencies making statements of their own accord. The statement may later, perhaps after open debate in the newspapers and with other branches of Government, be considerably whittled down. It may be flatly contradicted by the Secretary of State or even the President at one of their press conferences. Yet having been made, it never quite loses all its effect on the public mind, both within the country and outside. Many people affected by it abroad are especially inclined to regard it as a proof of the duplicity that they have often suspected underlies American policy. When, of course, the statement is not even authoritatively repudiated by high quarters, and uneasiness and disagreement regarding it are expressed only at the lower levels, the tendency is to consider the objections raised to it as temporary, evasive expedients, and the statement as the real policy of the U.S. Government. Nor indeed can those who take this view be blamed, for if it is desired that credence should not be given to the statement, the least that can be expected is that it should be promptly thrown overboard by those who really matter.

These reflections are induced by the recent Hollister directive. The last act of Mr. Hollister before retiring from the position of head of the International Co-operation Administration was to issue an order laying down that a halt should be called to the financing from U.S. Government foreign aid funds of all industrial and extractive enterprises, although in very special circumstances exceptions might be made. The preamble to the order states that the United States is convinced that private ownership and operation of industrial and extractive enterprises contribute more effectively than public ownership and operation to the general improvement of the economy of the country, through better management, research, quality control, lower prices, increased employment and capital growth.

The order was issued in Washington on the 12th September. It has not been recalled or repudiated upto now, though on the 14th it was reported from Washington that some State Department officials were annoyed at its having been made public at this particular time. In the circumstances it would appear justifiable to hold that the directive is substantive American policy and needs to be considered as such.

The implications of the directive are not difficult to see. This is an attempt to compel countries that get United States aid in the form of grants and loans to leave to private capital the setting up and management of manufacturing and mining concerns. A country may be convinced that its purposes are best served by the state ownership and management of such enterprises but it must not use aid funds for establishing them. And why should this be so? Because the United States Government has concluded that not only in the United States but throughout the world, private ownership and operation of such enterprises, in the words of the preamble to the order, contribute more effectively to the general improvement of the economy of the country.

This absolute proposition is on the face of it extremely doubtful. Results may vary from country to country and even from concern to concern, depending on the relevant circumstances in each case. A Report of 1951 in this country came to the conclusion that judged by the twofold criterion of economy and quality, rightly applicable to public enterprise, the claim of efficiency made on behalf of private enterprise as a whole was often exaggerated. Stating that the popular criterion of the success of private enterprise was almost invariably profit, the report went on to say "A concern may be inefficiently administered, its management may be corrupt, a private commission may be added to each purchase of raw material and each sale of finished goods, the expenditure may be highly inflated by all the numerous devices that come under the head of padding, the quality of the goods produced may be well below the standard, and yet if a profit is made and a dividend paid, very rarely will there be any questioning from any source; the concern will be considered successful, and its shares freely dealt in on the stock exchanges."

To hold that one pattern, that of private enterprise alone, is good and must prevail, is to adhere to what has sometimes been called Chamber of Commerce Marxism, a form of strict economic determinism that goes so far as to hold firmly that the free enterprise system is the cause of liberty. It refuses to realise that in fact liberty is the cause of the free enterprise system among other things, and that modifications impinging upon some only of the effects of a cause are scarcely likely to destroy the cause.

The present seems both a late and an unfortunate stage for the United States Government to press the export of its economic philosophy of private capitalism. Though much aid has been given in the past, there has not been any such open attempt. An influential London newspaper quotes an ICA official as saying even now "We are not trying to make other countries change their ways." Yet it cannot but be concluded that the aim of the directive is just that. The reason would seem to be the belief that "We play into Communist hands when we help to socialise a country."

The part Socialist measures have played in bringing about the Welfare State, and the invigorating effect the Welfare State has had on the maintenance of true democracy, are completely neglected. In the light of such thinking, the future of American aid, and of the American foreign policy in which that aid plays no small part, can scarcely be regarded with confidence. Clear repudiation of the directive even now is most desirable.

The aid Mr. Krishnamachari seeks is for the public sector in which are included a number of manufacturing and extractive units. In conformity with this directive, it is not unlikely that it may be proposed that they should be transferred to the private sector with joint Indo-American private capital. This would undoubtedly gladden the heart of Indian capitalists, who would welcome the opportunity offered to recover some of the ground they had lost to the State, and would seek to entrench themselves all the more strongly for the future. The question arises, is it altogether a coincidence that the Indian Business Delegation, headed by Mr. Birla, should have been so conveniently present in the United States when this directive was issued? Can it be that the discussions of its members with their American colleagues had not a little to do with the making of this public announcement at this time? The Government of India would seem to have good reason to be on its guard against counsel from these quarters.

26-9-1957

13

OF SURVIVAL

Rarely has a year ended so gloomily for men of goodwill who are, and would remain, free! In the past, there have been times when it seemed that tyranny must triumph; yet it was generally clear where duty lay. Today so complex seem the circumstances, so fraught with danger the consequences of any course of action, that confusion and uncertainty appear the prevailing mood of even the usually courageous and discerning. A very strange feeling is abroad, a feeling of general disorientation. It is almost as if every one who could or should act his part is paralysed, not so much by fear as by simply not knowing what to do. In the minds of many, the question forms itself despairingly, "Is this the way former civilisations perished?"

The revelation during the last quarter of the year of the amazing advance in missiles and rocketry by the totalitarian Soviet Union seems to have left the democratic nations and their leaders completely confounded. The more detailed their information becomes regarding the present capacity and future potentiality of Soviet power, the more the seriousness of the situation impresses itself upon them.

Whatever the rationalisations of national pride, thinking men in all such countries, including those outside alliances and pacts, had understood, even if it was but dimly and subconsciously, that their safety and the possibility of their escaping subjection to the despotic tyrannical power of the Communists lay in the superior striking capacity of the United States. That country, they felt on the whole, would not launch a war, while at the same time its strength would make very unlikely the launching of a war by its opponent or the obtaining by it through threats of war of undue advantage. This position is now altered. The preponderance of power has passed to the Soviet Union and the United States itself is mortally threatened. Its allies find both its and their position becoming increasingly precarious, and the change in the balance of power causes grave apprehension even in neutral nations of the democratic persuasion.

The full range of the Soviet ability to destroy is still perhaps not known. But what is known has certainly aroused fear among nations famous for their courage in conditions of danger. The astute nature of Soviet diplomacy, its combination of harsh threats with apparently reasonable proposals, has driven home further the terror in their minds. That in the circumstances, the recent NATO meeting showed even the appearance of unity must be regarded as remarkable. Whether this will last is another matter. The realist must prepare himself for the not-too-distant time when perhaps each one of the European nations may seek a separate arrangement with the Soviet Union.

Should that happen, the end—result will be the same for all, total subservience to the Soviet power. Yet it may seem to these peoples the only way of survival in a world that has suddenly become too difficult for their *minds to grapple with and too dangerous for their hearts* to hold out against. Even in Britain, the country which stood alone for quite a time against overwhelming power in the last war, there is no lack of leading men to recommend any arrangement, adjustment, compromise, coming to terms, giving up unilaterally the weapons it holds, in the hope that thereby survival may be ensured.

The morale of the Opposition party itself seems badly shaken and its constant appeals to the Government not to intensify or even continue the precautionary measures of the past sometimes sound almost hysterical.

Within the United States up to now there has been no large movement of opinion towards abandoning the present policy of attempting to prevent further expansion by the Communists. But morale has undoubtedly been affected. It may well be that the same kind of feeling that has begun to wear down the will to resist of the European nations may acquire considerable influence in the United States, now that its cities and installations appear for the first time to have become subject to direct attack. Survival may seem to its people too a good to be valued above everything else.

The desire for survival is certainly important. In view of its present revolutionary impact on the minds of men, it deserves examination. Life is undoubtedly dear; yet there are not a few individuals who accept the likelihood of its ceasing without undue concern. Many knowingly embark on undertakings, even by way of sport, in which the probability of danger to life is always present and often high.

All human beings are indeed aware that each one of them is from the moment of his birth a prisoner under sentence of death with an indefinite reprieve. At any moment the reprieve may be cancelled. Nor, once that happens, can any appeal be launched. Judgment on this point is final and inexorable. Man is from the moment of his birth dying. In his individual capacity, survival can never mean more than a short period, some years.

Why then is he so concerned about men collectively, the general public? Since to each one of us death comes and is certain to come, does it really matter if it comes to all at the same time, so that none is alive to survive the other? To people to whom individual death is a commonplace occurrence, why should universal death seem *something so horrible that in order to avoid it they* appear prepared to give up the most sacred values, those that, in saner moments they have always been conscious, alone make both the importance and true enjoyment of living.

What is so astonishing is that even philosophers and sages, *who have reconciled themselves to the ending of* their own lives and suffer not in the least from any fear of death and the unknown hereafter, should become tremendously agitated and confused at the thought of the extinction of human life as a whole. Men of ability and character, who would willingly face death themselves in defence of their principles, urge entire nations to shed all their principles in order merely to survive, that is to remain alive. They throw the whole weight of their personalities—noble and impressive in many cases—behind the cynical, time-serving maxim "Better a live dog than a dead lion."

The only possible explanation for this attitude of mind is the half-formed, inchoate hope that once all opposition to the tyrant is ended and his power is supreme, he will gradually become less tyrannical and may even begin to act upon impulses genuinely beneficial to his subjects. Thus once again, liberty and all its concomitants could come to the world and men. There has of course never been domination of the whole world by a tyrant or a small oligarchy, though tyrannies and oligarchies alike have dominated the whole world as known to them. History shows that in such circumstances never by the wish of the ruler did liberty rise and flourish. Always it had to be fought for; its beginnings even could only be established by the overthrow of the rulers. A world-tyranny would make any attempt of this nature impossible.

For democratic and civilised nations the close of 1957 marks both an end and a beginning. It is the end of that period of comparative, though often troubled, security, during which they, including many formerly subject peoples that came newly to nationhood, were able to maintain their traditional freedoms, relying upon their combined strength and especially upon the strength of the most powerful of them. It is the beginning of a period of tremendous dislocation during which fear, indecision and disunity may well become their guides to a world of slavery, living in which will make them and their children long bitterly for the extinction to escape which they readily embraced subjection.

The choice, now as always, is ultimately their own. With wisdom and resolution, they may still be able to pluck the flower of safety with liberty from the nettle of tyrannical totalitarianism, though in the process they may have to face the danger of universal destruction. Will they take the risk?

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